

The Russian NATO discourse

*An analysis of perspectives on the North Atlantic
Treaty Organization in Russian newspapers*

Tina Aarskaug



*Master thesis – European and American studies
The Faculty of Humanities*

Supervisors:

Katarzyna Zysk and Paal S. Hilde

At the Norwegian Institute for Defense Studies (IFS)

UNIVERSITY OF OSLO

Fall 2011

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2011

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Tina Aarskaug

<http://www.duo.uio.no/>

Print: Reprosentralen, Universitetet i Oslo

Abstract

This thesis looks at the NATO discourse in three Russian newspapers in the period between 2004 and 2010. It analyzes some of the main perspectives on NATO in an attempt to gain a better understanding of Russian views on the alliance. The analysis show that while some perspectives on the alliance are rooted back to the time of the Cold War, others are the result of important events in the Russia-NATO relationship that happened within the period of the analysis. The analysis also shows that despite the lack of press freedom in Russia, the debate about NATO in the three chosen papers: *Rossiskaya Gazeta*, *Nezavisimaya Gazeta* and *Noavaya Gazeta*, displays a range of perspective on both the alliance and on the how the Russian government deals with NATO matters.

Acknowledgements

In the process of writing this thesis, the guidance, the advice and the motivation I have received from my two supervisors, Katarzyna Zysk and Paal S. Hilde at the Norwegian Institute for Defense Studies (IFS), have been invaluable. Their insight on the subject, as well as on the process of working with a project such as this, has been truly inspiring and I believe crucial for the completion of the thesis. For this I am very thankful.

Furthermore, I would also like to thank IFS for believing in my project and granting me with a scholarship and with an office space, where much of the thesis has been written. This has also given me the opportunity to be a part of an inspiring academic environment.

My fellow companion in all of my Russian adventures, Ann-Karin Bjørge, also deserves special thanks for reading drafts and reducing mistakes in the final version of this thesis.

No one, however, has heard more about this project and listened more patiently to my many thoughts, ideas and also complains, than Kristoffer Slettholm. For always giving good advice and motivation, I am truly grateful.

Any remaining mistakes or errors, is the author's responsibility alone.

Tina Aarskaug,

Oslo, 09.11.2011

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Chapter one: Introduction

1.0 The aim of the thesis

During the Cold War the Soviet Union and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) were each other's main adversaries. Following the demise of the Soviet Union and the end of the Cold War, the Russian Federation emerged as one of 15 new countries and as the main heir of the USSR. This meant that Russia inherited the Soviet Union's complex relationship with NATO. Following four decades of mutual mistrust, post-Soviet Russia and the alliance embarked upon a partnership that since the beginning of the 1990s has been through both positive and difficult phases. Since the new partnership was established, the suspension of formal contact between NATO and Russia through the NATO-Russia Council (NRC), as a result of Russia's war with Georgia the summer of 2008, has served as a definite highpoint in terms of confrontational tensions. However, after the break, a period of resuming contact and reestablishing the partnership followed.

This thesis' main goal is to analyze the NATO discourse in Russian newspapers in order to gain a better understanding of the Russian view on the alliance. By studying articles from three different Russian newspapers, this thesis will look at some of the main perspectives on the alliance in Russia. Hopefully, this might also contribute to a better understanding of Russia's relationship with the organization. The period of interest for this study is from the beginning of 2004 until the end of 2010. This timeframe has been set due to its distinct pattern of *rising tensions* between Russia and the alliance up to the summer of 2008, and by a *decrease in tensions* in the years that followed. This period includes the second presidential term of Vladimir Putin, and the nearly three first years of Dmitri Medvedev's first term as president of the Russian Federation.¹ During Putin's second presidential term, Moscow's foreign policy became increasingly assertive, in line with the economic upturn the country experienced at the time. This new Russian self-confidence resulted in a steady downward turn in its relationship with the West in general, and with NATO in particular. The war with Georgia in August 2008, happened only months into Medvedev's presidency, which caused the suspension of formal Russia-NATO contact.

¹ Dmitri Medvedev's first term as president of the Russian Federation lasts until the new presidential election in 2012, but it is the period from when he was elected in 2008 until the end of 2010 that has been set as a timeframe for this study.

However, after the war and the following break, a somewhat softer approach has been detected from Moscow's side in relations to the alliance.

It is worth noting that, while the NATO debate within the study's timeframe was concerned with a range of topics, the aspect of enlargement² of NATO has clearly been one of its main concerns. By enlargement, I am referring both to the actual inclusion of new members into the alliance, but also to the competition for influence in the post-Soviet space, where Russia believes it ought to play a special role. Due to the importance of this subject between 2004 and 2010, this aspect of the debate will be the analysis' main concern.

By examining the debate about NATO in Russian newspapers during this period, which has such a clear low-high-low development in tensions, the images of NATO and the perspectives on the alliance can be analyzed in terms of whether the NATO discourse in Russian newspapers has been static or altered in line with the overall debate.

The analysis of the NATO discourse will hopefully give valuable insight on a variety of Russian perspectives on the alliance, which in turn can contribute to a better understanding of Russia's relationship with the organization. In addition, these perspectives may also be valuable in terms of views on Russia's role in a contemporary world, which do not only affect its relationship with NATO, but also other aspects of Russian foreign policy. With this as a point of departure, this thesis main research question is as follows:

In the light of the development of the Russia-NATO relationship from 2004 until 2010, what can the discourse about NATO in Russian newspapers tell us about Russian perspectives on the alliance in particular and on Russia's foreign policy in general?

Furthermore, six sub questions are added to this main question in an attempt to clarify important aspects of the NATO discourse. The Russian media climate is known for being under governmental control and suffering from lack of press freedom. As the main subjects of the analysis of this thesis are articles from Russian newspapers, the aspect of whether there really is a debate in these newspapers must be examined. Thus, the first question asks whether there was a debate about NATO in the newspapers from 2004 until 2010.

In order to answer the question to what extent there was a debate, it might be useful to look at whether the articles were keeping close to the official Russian line when

² The terms "enlargement" and "expansion" are used about NATO's process of including new members into the alliance, to utter a positive or negative stand, respectively. In my thesis I choose to use the term *enlargement*, not stating a personal opinion but rather choosing one of the two.

treating NATO matters. Therefore, the second question asks whether the perspectives on NATO in the articles were consistent with, or in contrast to official views on the alliance.

One might expect that if the perspectives on NATO in the articles were close to the official view, analysis and comments would be kept out. The third question therefore asks whether the articles in the Russian newspapers were of a descriptive rather than a normative character.

Moreover, in order to analyze the main perspectives on NATO in the Russian newspaper discourse, it might be worth noting whether the views on the alliance were mainly negative, or if there also were positive views on the alliance. Thus, the fourth question asks if there was a trend that the image of NATO in the debate was mainly negative, or if a more nuanced position could be detected.

In order to get a better understanding how NATO was perceived in Russian newspapers within the period of this study, it can be valuable to ask what the debate's main concerns were and study these closer. Hence, the fifth question asks what topics were given most attention during the period, and what can be said to be the debate's main concerns between 2004 and the end of 2010.

The sixth and last question is linked to the change of presidency in 2008, from Putin to Medvedev, and whether this had an effect on the debate. If the change in presidency could be detected in the debate, then what did these alterations consist of, and if not, then what does it say about the debate about NATO in Russia.

In the following, I will describe the outline of the thesis as a way to illustrate the study's main focus and give an overview of how I attempt to answer the questions asked.

1.1 The outline

After these introductory notes, the next part of this chapter will look at the theoretical and methodical framework of the analysis of the articles. I will show how the analytical framework of a discourse analysis (DA) may be used as a point of departure for this study. A discourse analysis takes into consideration under what circumstances a text is written in. Using the main principles of such an analytical framework is useful for implementing a more comprehensive analysis of the NATO discourse. The already mentioned context of the media climate in Russia, but also the Russia-NATO history, is seen as context necessary to study before doing the analysis of the articles.

Hence, the following chapter will offer crucial background information. Chapter two, *The Russian media*, will create a backdrop for the analysis by assessing the Russian media. Here, the thesis will look at the development that has led to the situation of lack of press freedom in Russia today and the implications this have for the analysis of the articles.

Chapter three, *Russia-NATO relations* will treat relevant aspects of the Russian foreign policy in terms of its relationship with NATO. It will further offer a historical overview of the Russia-NATO relationship. In comparison to chapter two, the third chapter will go much more in depth, as understanding the development of the Russia-NATO relationship is perceived as invaluable for the analysis.

The core part of this thesis is chapter four *The NATO debate*. This chapter is divided in two, and consists of *Part 1: Main concerns, 2004-2010* and *Part 2: Analysis of the debate*. The first part will present an overview of the debate's main concerns. It will also treat the newspapers' profiles and serve as an introduction to the more in depth analysis of the debate, which follows in the chapter's second part. Here, the analysis of the NATO debate will be presented, and the main perspectives and views on NATO and Russia's relationship with the alliance will be discussed and analyzed.

In chapter five, *Conclusion*, I will discuss the results of the study, and look at the main perspectives on the alliance in the NATO discourse in the Russian newspapers. I will comment on how these can contribute to a better understanding of Russia's relationship with the alliance.

Not all the articles studied for the analysis are referred to directly in this text. Therefore, there is an overview of the articles not referred to in the thesis in the *Appendix*, which follows at the very end of the thesis.

1.2 Theoretical approach

The aim of this study is to gain a better understanding of the Russian view of NATO in order to easier comprehend its relationship with the alliance. As this will be done by analyzing articles from Russian newspapers, some aspects of text analysis are worth emphasizing. Therefore, in the following I will look at the term *text* and *discourse* to clarify some basic principles.

Firstly, *text* can be understood in both wide and narrow terms. A narrow approach sees text as being communicative actions within an apparent text genre where the theme is clear to the recipient. In its wider sense, text is understood as being any action that the

recipient interprets as having a communicative meaning (Brekke 2006: 19-20). The texts used in my analysis are written texts within a defined genre, as they are all articles from newspapers. It is also clear who has produced the text, as well as who the recipients are.

Secondly, the term *discourse* can be said to mainly be understood in two senses. First, as defined by Vivien Burr (2003: 202), the term discourse is used “to refer to a systematic, coherent set of images, metaphors and so on that construct an object in a particular way”. In other words, a discourse describes a certain way to understand the world and our reality – or parts of it (Jørgensen and Phillips 1999: 9). The other way in which the term is used is “to refer to the actual spoken interchanges between people” (Burr 2003: 202). A discourse is in its first sense an expressed way of understanding reality, while in the other sense it is understood as one certain conversation or a defined communicative action.

Thus, *text analysis* is to make sense of these communicative interchanges. And a *discourse analysis* is one way to go about it. Again drawing on Burr (Burr 2003: 202) discourse analysis can be described as: “the analysis of a piece of text in order to reveal either the discourse operating within it or the linguistic and rhetorical devices that are used in its construction”. The analysis that Burr here describes is a two-level analysis. Either one can search for the discourse itself, finding what arguments and meaning a certain discourse contains, or one can go deeper into the linguistic structures of that discourse. As will be described more in detail later, in my analysis I will not break down the discourse in a linguistic sense, but rather look for the patterns of argumentation in the debate about NATO in Russia.

Furthermore, as the thesis’ analysis of Russian perspectives on NATO is a study of articles written in Russian newspapers, it may be worth making some comments on the aspect of *media discourse*. In our everyday life we are surrounded by the media, with news being brought to us through a variety of channels. This constant flow of information, which shapes our image of reality, is also adapted and shaped to suit our perception of our world. In the words of Donald Matheson (2005: 6): “Journalists, talkshow hosts, soap opera scriptwriters, among others, all seek to construe the world in ways that will make sense to the wider public, mixing together specialists voices and translating them into common knowledge”. Even though the makers of the communicative message in the media rely on the already existing images of reality, the relationship between media and the public is not a balanced one as such. One reason being that “while on one level the meanings that are found

in the media are shared, the power to make those shared meanings is not shared” (Matheson 2005: 2).

Discourse analysis is an approach to text and reality that has roots in social constructivism. The constructivist approach to reality can be said to be a response to the realist and liberalist perceptions of the mechanisms that explain how the world works Jørgensen and Phillips (1999: 13). The social constructivist perception of an interrelation between discourses and our perception of reality is one of the main elements in Norman Fairclough’s critical discourse analysis. By using some of Fairclough’s main principles from his approach to DA, the analysis of the debate about NATO can be put within an analytical framework. It is important to note, however, that my analysis uses Fairclough’s critical DA as a point of departure, not as a theoretical and methodical guide that is followed point-to-point. This means that I use the main principles of a critical DA and adapt these in order to address my research question. Fairclough’s focus on knowledge of the context in which text is produced and discourses are made, suits the aim of my analysis well. Therefore, the term “text in context” creates an illustrating image of why the principles of DA can be seen as suitable for analysing the articles from Russian newspapers (Brekke 2006: 21).

Concerning his empirical approach to a critical DA, Fairclough’s point of departure is that of a three layered method, where a) text, b) discourse practice, and c) social practice, constitute the main areas of research. On text level he is interested in linguistics and the arguments used in the piece of text that is analysed. On a discourse practice level, the area of interest is the process of production and consumption of the text. When it comes to the level of social practice, Fairclough’s form of DA is concerned with the role the text plays in the social world and in order to fully comprehend this level, Fairclough believes that analysing a text is not enough. One has to apply other areas of research to get a comprehensive understanding of a text and its context. It is these principles of how the context has an effect on the making of the text, which may be said to be relevant for my analysis. The model described above may be seen as a backdrop and is adopted to suit my analysis of the articles.

1.3 Methodical approach

The reason for adopting the principles of a DA, is to be able to take the context in which the articles have been written into consideration when doing the analysis. Analyzing the debate about NATO between 2004 and 2010, without taking into account the context in which the

articles are written, would leave out valuable insight. Insight which may lead to a more comprehensive understanding of the NATO discourse in Russian newspapers, as well as a broader understanding of the main perceptions both on the alliance and on its relationship with Russia.

In terms of Fairclough's model described above, what he refers to as level one (text level), constitute the thesis' main sources, the articles I have collected for this study. Further, what he refers to as level two (discourse practice), which is the context where the articles are produced and read in, is in my analysis understood as the media climate in Russia. Due to the governmental control and lack of press freedom in the country, it is necessary to consider under what circumstances the articles have been produced in. This way, the articles will be treated from the perspective that they are contributions to the debate, shaped by the Russian media culture.

The third level (social practice), is in this analysis seen as the Russia-NATO relationship that the articles refer to. The relationship is seen as an important context for the articles in terms of crucial events that has shaped the NATO discourse, but also in terms of the images and perspectives on the alliance, which has been established through the history of the relationship.

Thus, understanding the media environment in which the articles are created, is seen as an important aspect of the analysis. So is the history of the Russia-NATO relationship. This is why, as illustrated in the outline of the thesis, this study will offer one background chapter discussing the Russian media climate and its implications for the analysis, and one chapter treating the relationship between Russian and NATO. Thus, the practical conduct of the analysis will not be a three step analysis of each article, but the context will be discussed beforehand to shape a backdrop for the analysis.

1.3.1 Collecting sources

The process of collecting sources for this thesis has been implemented on two different levels. The first was acquiring sources on background information on Russia's relationship with NATO and on the media climate in the country. The second level was that of collecting relevant articles from the newspapers.

In terms of acquiring background information on Russian media, the goal was to gather secondary sources which could give explanations to why the media climate in Russia has developed the way it has, and also give a description of where the country stands today in

terms of press freedom. Extensive literature on this subject is available, thus one of the challenges was to choose sources that would be of relevance to this study. Particularly relevant has been information concerned with how the Russian government has taken a growing interest in controlling and using the media for its own purpose. Further, the thesis treats newspapers in particular, hence, the newspaper industry has been of special interest. In addition, it was one of the thesis' goals to choose three newspapers, which would be expected to differ from each other. The use of secondary sources contributed to the selection of these papers.

A number of studies have been written on the Russia-NATO relationship. Therefore, one of the major challenges has been to get an overview of the literature and the different explanations given in terms of the path Russia has taken in relations to the alliance the last years. In order to understand the Russian debate about NATO between 2004 and 2010, there is a need to grasp the political situation as it was at this time. However, images of NATO in Russia are linked to the time of the Cold War and the division of the world between NATO and the members of the Warsaw Pact. Hence, during the study of the debate, it has been necessary also to look at the time long before the timeframe set for the analysis. Overall, accessing this literature was not very challenging, however, limiting it in terms of relevance to this study, was. In addition, using secondary sources both from Western as well as Russian experts was considered important, as this was expected to give a more diverse image of the Russia-NATO relationship. Further, taking into consideration Russian expert opinions on these matters might draw attention to perspectives that would make it easier to understand the opinions put forth in the Russian debate.

The second level of collecting sources has been executed in the search of relevant newspapers and articles for the analysis. In terms of the three newspapers, the choice fell on newspapers expected to be representing, at least to a certain degree, different perspectives on NATO. This resulted in choosing *Rossiskaya Gazeta* (RG), *Nezavisimaya Gazeta* (NG) and *Novaya Gazeta* (Novaya). *Rossiskaya Gazeta* is a governmental newspaper representing the official line. Due to its official status, RG serves as a point of departure in the analysis in terms of debate and whether the views set forth in the other two newspapers coincide with, or are in opposition to the official views on NATO issues. NG is a newspaper broadly perceived to be fairly independent, while Novaya is probably one of the most critical national newspapers in Russia today.

The main challenge in terms of collecting sources on this level has been that of searching for relevant articles. The newspapers I have chosen are all national with online editions, which reflect to a large degree the paper editions, although some of the newspapers might do some adjustments in respect to the printed versus the electronic articles. However, I have chosen to use online articles as these have been fairly easy to access.

The different newspapers, however, have quite different web sites and varying possibilities to search for and find relevant articles. First, RG's online edition has a rather advanced system for making an article search, where you can limit it both after words in the text and in the headline, as well as limiting a search by for example local, business or weekend editions. Furthermore, the online paper also has its own NATO-tag, or link, where articles written about NATO are gathered in one place. In addition it has sub groups such as "NATO and enlargement" and "NATO and Russia". I started out looking at the articles under the "NATO and Russia"-tag, but expanded the search for the overall NATO-tag as this gave an extended image of the debate. As a requirement, the articles had to be from a federal edition to be analyzed. Articles that were from regional or other editions, including special internet editions were excluded due to considerations in terms of including articles that were available to as many readers as possible.

Second, NG also had a NATO-tag which made the search easier. However, it had not divided these into sub groups, which means that everything that has been written about NATO during 2004-2010 is all collected here. This paper without a doubt had the largest amount of articles on the subject; an example is the year 2008 when the total number was 232 articles, while in RG the number was 59. As each article was represented with a headline and an introductory paragraph, it was fairly easy to get an impression on whether the article would be relevant or not. The articles chosen from this paper were mainly from the "Politics" section. This is an own section in the standard printed edition of the paper, but there is also an extended version that comes with the basic paper twice a month. For this paper I chose not to analyze those articles that were especially written for the online edition, as these then would not be available to those who did not have access to the printed edition.

Third, Novaya did not have a NATO-tag and it was not possible to do a word search at the same time as you limited the search for a time period. The option was either to go through all the editions from 2004 until 2010, or to do a word search for NATO and a year, such as "NATO 2005". Then articles about NATO, which were either written in 2005 or referring to 2005, would emerge as the result. This proved itself to be the most successful

method. However, there were no headlines visible and little text to each link, and therefore I was forced to access every article before deciding whether the topic was relevant. But, unlike the previous papers, Novaya did not have the same amount of articles to search through.³

The results of the analysis of the NATO debate in the Russian newspapers are presented in chapter four, and constitute this thesis' main part. As the articles are all (with very few exceptions) written in Russian, this paper offers insight in a debate that displays perspectives on NATO and Russia's relationship with the alliance, which otherwise would not be easy accessible. This thesis' main contribution is insight on the debate about NATO in Russian articles and it will demonstrate these perspectives by the use of examples. Due to how this thesis' main sources are written in Russian, the examples and the quotes used to illustrate the analysis' main findings are all my translations. The original articles are referred to in the text, and in the bibliography each of these articles may be found.⁴

1.3.2 Challenges

As with most studies, there are several challenges to this particular one. First, there is the already discussed media climate in Russia and the lack of press freedom. This is linked to the question asked about to what extent there is a debate in Russian newspapers, due to the governmental control. It also serves as the already mentioned context seen as important in order to give a comprehensive analysis of the NATO discourse. Therefore, the Russian media environment will be treated more in detail in chapter two.

Second, there is also the aspect of limitations due to representativeness in terms of reducing the number of articles to fit the timeframe set for this project. This has by far been one of the greatest challenges for this study. Furthermore, limiting the search in number according to relevance can be said to be one of the major pitfalls of a study such as this, as what is seen as relevant is linked to what one would like to find, and what questions one wants answered. However, it was necessary to limit the number of articles due to the extensive number available, and the process took shape while doing the search. In the initial

³ Towards the end of the project Novaya Gazeta's web page had been given upgrade, which also included its search function. Thus, the method described in the following was executed in the old layout of the web site, resulting in a different approach than what it would be if the search had been done after the new site was launched (29.10.2011).

⁴ Articles from RG are referred to as from rg.ru, while articles from NG are referred to by ng.ru and Novaya by novayagazeta.ru. The date of when each article was written will also be referred to, both in the text and in the bibliography, for example: (ng.ru 2008.12.08). The link to this particular article may then be found under the year 2008 for Nezavisimaya Gazeta in the bibliography.

years, some issues were noticeably more frequently treated than others, and combined with background knowledge on the period this created a platform where I could continue the further search from. It was desirable to see the development on the main issues in the debate; therefore I followed up on these, adding new topics as they became relevant during the period.

However, focusing on issues that seem relevant, or on articles expected to give valuable insight on the perspectives on the alliance, might result in choosing an article with the headline “Do we need NATO?” and not the one which states possible killings of civilians due to a NATO mission in Afghanistan. This might lead to losing articles with relevant comments on NATO. Further, going through the hundreds of articles written on this subject, one will probably find a number of different angles and perspectives on each topic. However, the main goal of this study has been to find perspectives and arguments which are not just stated once, but show a clear trend and create an apparent pattern. Therefore, the aim has been to read and analyze articles that do not just state facts about a certain meeting or about a project where NATO and Russia cooperate. Of special interest have been articles such as those labelled “opinion”, “remarks” and “comments”.

In total, for this study I have read and analyzed 206 articles. The number of articles for each year and each newspaper has varied, as it has been dependent on the number of relevant articles, and their length. The distribution between the years is fairly even as can be seen by this overview: in 2004 I read 31 articles in total, in 2005 the number was 27, while for 2006 I read 28. The year 2007 also resulted in 28 articles, and 2008 in 37. For the year 2009 it was 29 and for 2010 it was 26.

Third, another aspect in terms of challenges to the study is the question of how many people actually read the newspapers and how the perspectives put forth in the articles reflect the overall opinion. According to Oates and McCormick (White, Sakwa and Hale 2010: 128) a survey on the media use in Russia for the year 2008 showed that the number of people who read national newspapers routinely was 18 percent. 38 percent answered that they read them some times, while 30 percent seldom read them and 13 percent never even picked them up. This overview only included paper editions. The use of internet in relations to media was represented by a separate question in this survey. To this question 12 percent answered that they use internet in a media context routinely, while 61 percent answered never.

The aspect of representation in terms of who actually participate in the NATO debate by reading the articles is of course necessary to highlight. However, this is not an

opinion survey; it is an analysis of the perspectives put forth in the public press. One may still claim, however, that some aspects of the overall NATO debate in Russia plays into the NATO discourse in the Russian newspapers, and vice versa. As described earlier, there is a correlation between those who create and those who are exposed to the images in media discourses. However, while the power to impose perspectives upon the recipient belongs to the media, the images in the newspapers must make sense and to the reader and reflect their perception on the subject. Thus, the NATO discourse in the Russian newspapers, and the perspectives put forth on the alliance in the articles, can be seen as a part of a larger NATO discourse in Russia.

This thesis will only be studying parts of the NATO discourse in articles from three Russian newspapers. However, the opinions and arguments put forth in the articles and the perspectives on the alliance may contribute to a better understanding of Russian views on NATO.

Chapter two: The Russian media

2.0 Lack of press freedom

The importance of understanding the context, in which the debate about NATO in the Russian newspapers takes place, has already been emphasized. Therefore, in the following, explanations on the development of a state controlled media climate will be given and the implications this might have for the analysis discussed. The media situation as we know it in Russia today has been influenced by the Soviet media culture, which cannot be said to have provided the Russian media with a solid base from which to prosper. Further, with the economic crisis of the 1990s and the challenges of transforming from a socialist state to a new system, the Russian media climate has developed into an instrument for economic as well as political actors.

The non-profit organization *Reporters Without Borders* placed Russia on a pitiful 140th place in its Press Freedom Index from 2010, where 178 countries were evaluated (RFS.org). Joining Russia in this part of the index are countries such as Turkey and Ethiopia who were evaluated to a 138th and 139th place respectively, while Malaysia and Brunei followed directly behind. The evaluation stems from a study where a number of factors contributing to creating an environment for press freedom are assessed in each country. The study looks at the existence of censorship and self-censorship, the threat of physical violence for journalists and whether there are incidences where journalists are murdered or attacked. They also assess whether indirect threats have been made or if there is a judicial or administrative pressure on the media. There is also an assessment on whether there is a lack of access to information needed to provide objective news coverage. Russia's placement on the index indicates the lack of press freedom in the country.

In an article first published in *The Wall Street Journal* in November 2010, the Russian journalist Elena Milashina writes about the challenges she and her colleagues have met in their attempt to provide independent news coverage in the newspaper Novaya Gazeta (HRW.org). According to her, press freedom in Russia is close to extinct, and those still fighting for independence run the risk of being harmed. The fact that five journalist from her newspaper have been killed in the past ten years, including the much covered murder of Anna Politkovskaya in 2006, is to her proof enough that there are strong forces operating, trying to keep a lid on those offering critical views on Kremlin's misdeeds.

Indeed, the situation for journalists in Russia has long been criticized by organizations fighting for the rights of reporters around the world, and the country has been characterised as one of the most dangerous countries for journalists to work in (Hønneland and Jørgensen 2006: 135). The attacks and murders on journalists as well as the lack of transparency in the investigations, or even the lack of investigation in itself, contribute to the strained climate in which Russian media operates. This can be said to reflect the overall lack of transparency which influences and threatens civil society as a whole in Russia. How did the situation of lack of press freedom become as severe as it is today? There are different explanations for this, and in the following I will look at some relevant factors in the process of shaping the media climate in Russia.

2.1 The development of Russia's information climate

In stark contrast to the situation during most of the time of the Soviet Union, where in the words of de Smaele (2010: 1300): “a limited flow of information was the norm”, Gorbachev's reforms were followed by a prosperous time for the media business. His reforms of *perestroika* (reorganization) and *glasnost* (openness) from the mid 1980s contributed to an environment in which the number of actors of press media reached a distinct peak. From 1980 to 1990 the number of all editions of printed newspapers and journals jointly in Russia, went from 2488 million to 5010 million. In the following years, however, the number plummeted, and in 1995 the number was down to 299 million (Hønneland and Jørgensen 2006: 133). This downward development can to a large extent be explained in economic terms, as the economic crisis experienced by the Russian Federation during the 1990s also had a huge impact on the media industry.

During the transformation in the 1990s in post-Soviet Russia, there was an ongoing fight for economic and political power, where the media industry ended up playing an important part in this battle for influence. This is the reason why Soldner (White 2008: 158) sees the media culture that developed in Russia during the Boris Yeltsin's reign in the 90s as a result of “political capitalism”.⁵ By using this term, Soldner wants to highlight the process of transformation and conversion of political power into economic power. This is seen as the result of the challenging process of transformation from a socialistic state to a market oriented

⁵ The term “political capitalism” was originally used by Max Weber to describe ancient societies in the Far East, but Soldner finds the term useful in his analysis of the transformation process of the Soviet states from socialism (White 2008: 158).

system. What is peculiar with the Russian case, in his eyes, is the circularity of this process. By this he means that there was also a transformation of economic power into political power. The consequences that follows from such a system is that it “suppresses the emergence and establishment of alternative societal actors, such as political parties, trade unions, independent mass media and NGOs” (White 2008 : 160).

A system where the media was seen as essential in the process of gaining more political as well as economic power was established during this period. This created an environment where the different incentives, economic or political, were difficult to separate from each other. As a consequence, the importance of media outlets grew. According to Soldner (White 2008: 157) on a national level, the newspapers and magazines almost exclusively belonged to a commercial structure. This meant that it was different “big business” that divided the media market amongst them. De Smaele (2007: 1309) also recognizes this structure, and sees Yeltsin’s Russia as a “corporate or oligarchic system” where Yeltsin had the role of a mediator between the different groups fighting for power, consisting of bankers, media tycoons, business people, bureaucrats and politicians. A system where the media was supposed to serve both political and economic interests had been established.

Throughout Vladimir Putin’s presidency there were both continuities and changes in the media climate in Russia in respect to the system that had developed throughout the difficult 90s. In contrast to how the situation was in Russia during the first decade after the Soviet Union collapsed, the period that followed has been characterized by a shift where the economic aspect became less important, whereas the political side of the media industry has been treated with a growing interest. For example, media outlets owned by businessmen whose views were considered being hostile to the Russian leadership, were brought down and new Kremlin-friendly forces have stepped in to take their place. The structural change that followed with the new president is described by Olessia Koltsova (2006: 43) in these terms:

Vladimir Putin’s accession to power marked the decline of the epoch of CIGs⁶ and the new consolidation of the state. It also brought more stable rules of the game, both their formal and informal institutionalization. Renationalization of major media was a part of a broader policy of the Federal elite to concentrate various power recourses in its hands.

⁶ Cross-Institutional Groups (CIGs) is a term used by Koltsova, referring to power groups often holding share of media outlets, or informally controlling them. These groups at times also owned media holdings (Koltsova 2006: 37).

In addition to the consolidation of state controlled or owned media channels, the government has both direct and indirect ways of controlling the flow of information in the country. As stated by de Smaele (2007: 1304) in terms of *direct* control over institutions of mass media, the influence of the Ministry of Culture and Mass Communication can be seen as one of the most important. And further, in terms of *indirect* control the media outlets' dependence on the state is exploited as they rely on licenses, facilities such as printing houses, and in financial terms in forms of subsidies or sponsorship (de Smaele 2007: 1304).

In addition to the development of a media culture influenced by economic as well as political incentives, another factor seen as having contributed to the existing media climate in Russia today, is the flaws and shortcomings of Russian media law. The existing laws on media in Russia are criticized for being contradictory and for giving too much room for maneuvering by those trying to control the flow of information. It is also criticized for a lack of laws, leaving areas open for questions (White 2008: 164). In addition to these shortcomings, de Smaele (2007: 1300) is concerned with the media culture with a distinct division between *de jure* and *de facto* positions on the law. She believes that while both the 1993 Constitution as well as the 1991 Russian federation Law on Mass Media gives a *de jure* right to access to information, there is a *de facto* restraint on the flow of information. This has lead to a media culture where personal networks matters to an even larger extent for Russian journalists seeking information, than in most countries with a higher level of press freedom. When trying to explain why this environment has established itself and developed in this direction, factors such as lack of distinct boundaries between the subsystems of politics, economy, law and media are seen as central (de Smaele 2007: 1309).

2.2 Information as power

Looking at the situation in today's Russia, Sarah Oates and Gillian McCormack (White, Sakwa and Hale 2010: 118) points at the paradox of the amount of information provided in the Russian media, versus the lack of democracy in society. The number of media companies in Russia after the mid 1990s has increased, while diversity and pluralism - which one should think would increase as a natural consequence of this development - has decreased. Oates and McCormack (White, Sakwa and Hale 2010: 118) highlight how the idea of the media as "objective" or "balanced" has never been widely accepted in Russia. They see this as a result of multiple factors, such as the use of media by the political elite, the acceptance by journalist

to this lack of professional balance and objectivity, as well as how the public seem to accept this unbiased and politically shaped form for flow of information in Russia.

Looking at the development of the Russian media climate, it is obvious that the Russian government has decided to use control over the distribution of news and other information to their advantage. The numerous mechanisms of controlling the flow of information speak for itself. As already mentioned, the situation for Russian journalists is seen as outright dangerous. Criticisms of Russian authorities can turn out even to be deadly. However, de Smaele (2007: 1304) is of the opinion that the role of the owners of media outlets must also be seen as contributing to the media climate. It is not the authorities alone that have created this environment, and the way many journalists accept the traditions of Russian journalism, is a contributing factor to the existing media climate in Russia.

In most democratic countries, the country's mass media is seen as a "fourth power" and a contributor of unbiased information. There is an agreement on those assessing the situation in Russia that as of today the information climate does not live up to these standards (de Smaele 2007: 1310, White 2008: 172). To illustrate the situation today is an interview with a journalist from Novaya Gazeta after an episode where several students at the Institute for Journalism at the University in Moscow were excluded from a lecture, where president Dmitri Medvedev had come to talk about foreign policy the fall of 2011. Vera Kitchanova, who is both a student at the University and working for Novaya, was not just denied access to the auditorium but also had to spend hours at a police station due to her expressed wish to ask Medvedev critical questions. According to her, it is a "democratic problem" in Russia today "that the fourth state power is to be forced into silence in this way" (Aftenposten, Salo: 2011.10.28).

2.3 Implications for the analysis

Knowing what environment the articles chosen for this study's analysis are written in, is of major importance. It helps understand their profiles and their positions in the landscape of a number of contributions to the printed press in Russia today. It may therefore be worth taking a quick look at each of the three chosen papers in terms of the media climate described above.

First, Rossiskaya Gazeta may be seen as a tool for the Russian government to reach out to the public. The perspectives presented on NATO and Russia's relationship with the alliance here, must be seen as reflecting the views the Russian government wants its recipient to read about this topic. Second, both Nezavisimaya Gazeta and Novaya Gazeta have

profiles that emphasize their wish to be independent and, thus, offer perspectives that may be in contrast to, and offer critique to the official perspectives. As will be described and discussed more in depth in chapter four, there are indeed noticeable differences between the papers and their articles, and a definite sense of contrasting views. This also includes sharp critique of the Russian government. To illustrate this, an example from Novaya may be used. The article concerns the foreign minister of US, Condoleezza Rice's visit to Vilnius in 2005, where she met with members of the Belorussian opposition. After the meeting she named Belarus the last dictatorship of Europe, a statement the article commented by pointing out that this meant that "either Putin is not a dictator or Russia is no longer a part of Europe" (Novayagazeta.ru 2005.04.25). Such comments points to a certain level of open critique towards the Russian leadership. Even though outright criticism may be more frequently observed in articles from Novaya, there are several articles that offer critique on Russia's leadership in NG too, displaying clear signs of debate. Still, an official paper, such as RG, does not have to be governmental friendly in every aspect. However, RG is still loyal to the Russian leadership and, thus, displays a clear sign of the control the Russian government has on this paper.

Nevertheless, the fact that there are indeed rather significant differences between the two more independent newspapers and the governmental paper, their contributions to the debate may be seen as contrasting the image of a state controlled press as described above. One reason why the debate in the newspapers to a certain degree can seem surprisingly free in terms of the expected restrains, may be seen in relations to the relatively low number of people in Russia reading newspapers on a regular basis. Instead of reading newspapers, watching TV is the major source of news and information in Russia. According Oates and McCormick (White, Sakwa and Hale 2010: 127) a survey from 2007 showed that in contrast to the 18 percent referred to in the introduction that in 2008 read newspapers routinely, 74 percent answered the same for television. Therefore, control over newspaper outlets may be said to have less effect in terms of political influence than controlling the TV channels. The Russian government seems to have taken the consequences of this, as it has a strong control over TV, while newspapers are allowed to act more freely. In addition, it might be worth noting how internet and social networks, such as twitter, are not being under governmental control, which has created a new channel for expressing oppositional views (Aftenposten, Tjønn: 2011.11.02). Thus, while few read the papers, the impression of a controlled media in Russia might be nuanced in terms of the relatively free printed press. This is not to say that

there is no control, because there are clearly many examples of it, but that the government's focus on controlling media in relations to TV, may explain the level of debate in Novaya and Nezavisimaya Gazeta.

Having discussed the Russian media climate as a level of context needed to grasp in order to analyse perspectives on NATO in the Russian newspapers; the next chapter treats the development of the relationship between Russia and NATO.

Chapter three: Russia-NATO relations

3.0 Russia's relationship with NATO

This chapter aims to create a backdrop for the analysis of the debate about NATO. In terms of background information on the relationship between Russia and NATO, both the history of these relations and the underlying mechanisms of Russia's foreign policy, are of importance. There have been many attempts by researchers to understand the driving forces behind Russian foreign policy. Even though their approaches might draw on different perspectives on how the world works and how states relate to each other, there seems to be some basic assumptions that are agreed upon concerning the nature of Russia. One aspect recognized as a major driving force in Russia's foreign and security policy is the perceived image of Russia as an important player at the international arena. In the following I take a closer look at the feature of Russia's identity linked to its aspirations of being a great power. This is closely linked to its relationship with the West and to its relationship with countries in its "near abroad", which will be treated respectively. Following the description of some of these underlying driving forces, the chapter further looks at the development of Russia-NATO relations, from when the alliance was established after the Second World War until the end of 2010. In order to see the NATO discourse in Russia in a broader perspective, the chapter will also offer some short comments on the public opinion on NATO in Russia. At the end of this chapter, in order to sum up and prepare for the analysis, which follows in chapter four, the most important events in the Russia-NATO relationship will be discussed and seen in relations to relevant features of Russia's foreign policy.

3.1 Great power aspirations

Some aspects of Russia's identity will be treated in the following, due to how identity, in the words of Valentina Feklyunina (2008: 607), "is seen as one of the key concepts in explaining why a country takes particular actions at the international arena". The term identity is seen as that which describes the shared perspective held in Russia concerning its role in the world. Using the term identity when discussing the development of Russian foreign policy, there is a need to note that it is mainly the *elite's* perspectives on Russia's identity that influence this policy. Furthermore, choices made in this political sphere are made as a result of several

factors. However, there seems to be reason to emphasize certain aspects of Russia's identity, as these may be said to be influencing on these decisions. These aspects may also be said to be a part of the driving forces of Russian foreign policy, also in terms of its NATO relationship. To add to the words of Feklyunina on the influence identity has on political choices, the words of Jeffrey Mankoff (2010: 3) can be quoted:

A state's identity in the national system – whether it sees itself as a satiated or a revisionist power, a nation-state or an empire – provides the intellectual framework that shapes decisions about how power is employed.

When looking at the development of the Russia-NATO relationship, the image of Russia as a mighty player in world politics seems to be relevant. The identity as a great power builds on the image of the country being a previous empire with continuous expanding borders, a country destined to play a part on the international arena. Therefore, the importance of Russia's past as a tsarist empire and as one of the two poles in the world's bipolar system during the aftermath of the Second World War, continues to play a vital part of the identity in Russia. After the fall of the Soviet Union, where Russia went from being a part of a military superpower to experiencing both economic and political turmoil, it became of major importance to revive the greatness of the past. As stated by Feklyunina (2008: 615-616) "positioning Russia as a great power and an independent centre in a multi-polar world became one of the most significant elements of Russia's image projected in the West after the early 2000s". These aspirations for playing an important role in world politics are reflected in the role Russia wants to have when deciding upon questions related to security politics within the Euro-Atlantic zone. James Goldgeier (2010: 10) believes that one significant explanation to the challenges in the NATO-Russia relationship stems from this aspiration Russia has to play a special role:

The core problem in NATO-Russia relations can be summed up quite simply: NATO will not allow Russia to have a veto over alliance decisions, while Russia believes it is a great power deserving a full voice in European security affairs.

The image of Russia as a great power, and as an equal to Europe and the US can be said to be closely linked. Russia's relationship with the West is also seen as an important aspect of the Russian identity, as the West always have served as a point of reference in its definition of what Russia is or should be (Feklyunina 2008: 608). The Russian intelligentsia has always been preoccupied with defining what is "Russian" in relations to what is seen as "European". As will be discussed in the following, the image of whether Russia is or should be a part of

the European community has played an important role in the shaping of Russian foreign policy, also in terms of its relationship with NATO.

3.2 Russia and the West

The political elite in Russia, during both the time when Russia was a tsarist empire, a part of the USSR and during the last two decades as a post-Soviet Russia, has been engaged in the question on whether Russia should align itself with the West, or not. This has resulted in different directions within the political landscape in Russia.

With the establishment of a Russian intelligentsia, from the eighteenth century and onwards, the debate about Russia's relationship with the West started to take shape (Leatherbarrow and Offord 2010: 47). The debate concerned whether it would be beneficial for Russia to look towards the West or not. This was also followed by questions regarding its identity, whether Russia was European or Asian – or something separate from them both. The two main camps consisted of Westernizers and Slavophiles and have later also been accompanied by the Eurasianist approach.

These schools of thought, and their labels, have gone through changes as the political environment has developed, both domestically and at the international level. One could divide these approaches into several different sub perspectives, and in the literature on the schools of thought in Russia, one finds varying numbers and labels. However, taking a look at the three schools' "core approaches" to Russian identity, can contribute to a better understanding of the role the West plays in the Russian identity. In short, the basic view of the Westernizers is a common "emphasis on Russia's similarity with the West" and the perspective that the West represents "the most viable and progressive civilization in the world" (Tsygankov 2010:4). Hence, following the European model in terms of culture, values and in the making of institutions, would in their eyes result in a more progressive and modernized Russian state (Legvold 2007: 108). There have been several approaches concerning what elements of the Western model that has been seen as favourable to Russia. According to Vera Tolz (2003: 82), Westernizers have traditionally agreed that "Russia had the advantage of being able to pick and chose the best aspects" of the Western heritage. This resulted in internal debates which mainly concerned what elements from the West that suited best to bring into Russia.

In contrast, the Slavophiles have traditionally been concerned with rejecting the West as a model for Russia. In their eyes the Russian Orthodox faith, the Russian culture and history represented something unique. Russia's uniqueness was seen as something the country ought to develop further, and not to be changed by Western influence. Further, the Slavophiles' rejection of the West to a large degree regarded the Western institutions, which they believed Russia would be better off without (Tolz 2003: 82).

Eurasianism is a perspective that can be said to offer a view that in some aspects represents a path for Russia between that sought by the Slavophiles and the Westernizers. As can be guessed from its name, it reflects an image of Russia's identity and its foreign policy as "linked to its geographic position at the crossroads between Europe and Asia" (Mankoff 2009: 65). The Eurasianist approach to Russia's relationship with the West has in time developed into a perspective which sees the West with suspicious eyes. This approach has also been influenced by great power aspirations and the aspect of Russia's identity as an empire. At the same time, Eurasianists have traditionally perceived the world as polar, divided by the power struggle between Russia and the US along with Britain (Tolz 2003: 126). However, the Eurasianist approach has split into several directions and the views of the extreme and the democratic Eurasianists are far from each other. While the extreme version is seen as more or less anti-Western, the mild version of this approach "favour close cooperation with Europe and the United States" (Legvold 2007: 111). However, even the mild forms of Eurasianism still hold the perspective that Europe and the US should not be Russia's top priority. This status belongs to the areas made up by the previous Soviet republics (Legvold 2009:111).

The influence these approaches have had in the making of Russia's foreign policy will be commented as part of the discussion on the different phases of the Russia-NATO history, later in this chapter. The point to be made here, then, is the importance of the West as a point of reference in Russia's quest on forming its identity. Whether this is part of a social constructivist explanation of how the "national Selves" are created due to interaction with the significant "other"⁷ or as an explanation with a geopolitical focus, the importance of the West is nonetheless obvious. In the words of Jeffrey Mankoff (2009: 26):

How Russia defines itself with relation to the West is in many ways the country's key foreign policy question. The relationship will continue to play a central role in determining the nature of Russia's interactions with other countries and central

⁷ See Tsygankov (2010: 14-21) for further explanations to the social constructivist view on the development of Russia's foreign policy.

international institutions. Even if Russia's leaders do not see their country as belonging to the West in some fundamental way, their foreign policy has none the less inevitably been Western-centric.

The relationship Russia has had with the West since after the Second World War is reflected in its relationship with NATO, and the chapter will treat the different periods where the relationship has flourished or stagnated shortly. However, there is one more aspect that is worth giving attention in terms of Russia's identity and choices it has made in international politics, and that is the importance of the areas of the "near abroad".

3.3 Russia and the "near abroad"

The term "near abroad" is used in reference to countries perceived as having a special connection to Russia through language, history and culture, often meaning the states of the Soviet Union. Jeffrey Mankoff (2010: 7) sees Russia's attempt to remain the leading influential force in this region as a struggle that is strongly linked to the ambition of being a great power. Within this region, Russia views itself as having a unique role and that this ought to be reflected in its influence in these areas. The way it has pursued its visions for these countries has varied depending on its economic situation, its domestic challenges and the changes in international politics.

These countries have, since the fall of the USSR, been the ones who directly have felt the growing assertive foreign policy in Russia. After a steady economic growth during the first decade of the millennium, the assertiveness of Russia's foreign policy could be seen both from the gas dispute with Ukraine in 2006 and the war with Georgia two years later, episodes that will be treated more in detail later. As pointed out by Lawrence T. Caldwell (Legvold 2007: 313) the attempt to "staunch the flow of Moscow's ebbing influence" in these areas started as early as in 1991, and has continued up until today. However, Margot Light (White, Sakwa and Hale 2010: 231-232) points out that even though the areas have been stated of being of major interest, "in practice, however, little multilateral integration has been achieved". In addition, Russia has had different relationships with the different countries, as is pointed out by Mankoff (2009:243):

The European republics (Belarus, Ukraine and Moldova, plus the three Baltic states) have served as a buffer zone between Russia and the expanding Europe and the EU and NATO. The Caucasus and the Central-Asia, on the other hand, have been

important to Moscow initially as a zone of instability and insecurity along Russia's vulnerable southern frontier.

As can be seen from this quote, the "near abroad" consist of two groups. The first being the Western states which historically has served as buffer zones to the West, and in many aspects still continues to do so. The other group serves as a border to the south and its importance has varied in terms of the problems caused to Russia in this area. The two different groups, thus, pose different possibilities and threats for Russia, and hence are treated differently.

Furthermore, while Russia's closest partner is Belarus, the relationships with the Baltic countries has traditionally been seen as difficult. However, in the past years Russia's relationship with both Ukraine and Georgia has also been seen as strained. Due to the color revolutions in 2003 and 2004, in Georgia and Ukraine respectively, Russia's relationship with these two countries has "become far more difficult" (White, Sakwa and Hale 2010: 236).

When discussing the "near abroad" this is often related to the countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS). After the dissolution of the Soviet Union the CIS was established by Russia, Belarus and Ukraine. Shortly after, the rest of the previous republics also joined the CIS, except the three Baltic countries and Georgia. Georgia, however, became a member two years later in 1993, but decided to exit the Commonwealth again in 2008. In addition, Turkmenistan is only an associate member and Ukraine has not ratified the treaty it was a part of creating (Remington 2006: 12, White, Sakwa and Hale 2010: 232). The CIS also cooperates within the field of security, and in 1992 the countries signed a security treaty which was upgraded in 2002 to the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) (White, Sakwa and Hale 2010: 233). Despite the different attempts to cooperate with the countries in the region and to hold on to what has been named Russia's unique "sphere of influence", Dmitri Trenin points at how these countries "are moving ever farther from Moscow" (Trenin 2011). He sees this development as a result of Russia's foreign policy, where it has pushed "these countries away from its imperial embrace and toward greater independence" (Trenin 2011). As will be described in detail in the thesis next part, the analysis of the NATO debate in the Russian newspapers shows that the development of previous allies turning away from Russia, is one of the debate's main concerns.

3.4 The history of the Russia-NATO relationship

In the following an overview of the history of the Russia-NATO relationship from the Cold War up until the end of 2010 will be presented. The reason why the period of the Cold War

has been given attention, is that images of NATO in the debate in the newspapers from 2004 until 2010, are linked to the images of NATO that were established during the Cold War.

Following the period of the Cold War, from Yelstin to Medvedev, there were different waves in the relationship between the alliance and post-Soviet Russia. The events that happened during the second presidency of Putin and the first part of Medvedev's first term as president will be treated with special interest, as these create an important platform for understanding the debate in the analysis later.

3.4.1 The Cold War

The Russian perspectives on the North Atlantic Treaty Organization are difficult to comprehend if its historical context is not treated. Second World War is by the Russians named the "great patriotic war" and their efforts and contribution to the victory over Nazi-Germany still serves as a symbol of Russia's greatness. An example of the War's continued importance is the annual celebration of Victory Day on the 9th of May. Parades are organized through the whole country with that of the military parade on the Red Square in Moscow as the most spectacular. The immense losses that were experienced and the suffering of its people are often neglected or seen only as a proof of the Russian strength. In the humblest of ways, however, this paper understands its limitations and cannot move in to the era of the war. However, there is a wish to introduce the events of the Cold War not as a separate part of history, but as a continuation of a wartime that left the Soviet Union in a unique situation with its sphere of influence larger than ever, and most of Europe battered and frail.

During the aftermath of the Second World War, the Soviet Union has been said to have acted as though by suffering from the "Barbarossa-syndrome", meaning that it acted on fear of invasion from the capitalist West (Levering et al. 2001: 89). Hence control of buffer zones towards Europe as well as being in power of Germany's fate, was seen as vital. The differences between the Soviet Union and the major powers in the West, with the US at the front, played out in these crucial years just as the Second World War ended. A new era had begun, and for many the famous "iron curtain speech" that Churchill held in March 1946, is seen as the starting point. But no matter what exactly marks the point in time when the Cold War began, it is clear that for approximately four decades the world stayed divided in two blocs, which seemed only to share a mutual distrust to each other.

The fear of the Soviet Union and its communist ideology brought countries of the West together to form a security alliance: NATO. According to Pechatnov and Edmondson

(Levering et al 2001: 143), the formation of NATO had an important effect on the development of the Soviet Union:

It meant a military-political follow-up to the economic division of Europe started by the Marshall plan and resulted in the institutionalization of a Western anti-Soviet bloc headed by the United States that the Kremlin had tried so hard but ineffectually to prevent.

In the eyes of the Soviet Union, the fact that the US took a lead position within the alliance, and that the Scandinavian countries together with Italy and Portugal were welcomed to join, while all the countries belonging to the Soviet sphere of influence was kept out, was a sign of anti-Soviet forces building up during the late 1940s (Levering et al. 2001: 142-143).

NATO was established in Washington D.C. in April 1949. The organization originally had 12 members⁸ and Article five of the Washington Treaty from 1949 underlines its commitment to collective defense of the organization's members. The article emphasizes that an attack on one of the member states is perceived as an attack on all of them.⁹ In 1955 the communist counter piece to NATO – the Warsaw Pact¹⁰ - was established. Its formation came as a result of West-Germany's admission to the North Atlantic security alliance. According to Zubok and Pleshakov (1996: 70), the admission of West-Germany into the alliance, which meant rearmament and the establishment of the Bundeswehr, was one of Stalin's worst nightmares coming true. It meant that "NATO was on the way of becoming a full-fledged military force in Europe" (Zubok and Pleshakov 1996: 70). Hence, the formation of the Warsaw Pact came as a result of the increasingly tense situation, and the need felt by the communist bloc to support itself against its capitalist enemies in the West.

Furthermore, during the period of the Cold War there were several events that can be said to matter in the Russia-NATO relationship. However, more important than single episodes, was the establishment of an environment influenced by mistrust and the complex web of relations between Russia and the West. In 1953 Josef Stalin, the leader whose mere persona still causes disputes and raises questions, died and left the Soviet Union and the Cold War it was in the midst of, to Nikita Khrushchev. According to Zubok and Pleshakov (1996: 184-5) Khrushchev sincerely wanted to end the polarization of Europe and believed that

⁸ The 12 original members of NATO were: The United States, Canada, Belgium, France, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway, Denmark, Iceland, Italy, Portugal and the United Kingdom.

⁹ Article five, and the Washington Treaty can be read here:

http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/official_texts_17120.htm

¹⁰ The Warsaw pact originally had eight member countries: The Soviet Union, Poland, Hungary, Albania, Bulgaria, Romania, DDR and Czechoslovakia.

Vladimir Lenin's concept of "peaceful coexistence" was possible. However, the Cuban missile crisis in 1962 serves as a watershed in the history of the Cold War, and happened while he was the leader of the Soviet Union. In its aftermath a long truce followed, where the main goal was to avoid a devastating nuclear war (Zubok and Pleshakov 1996: 237).

The so called "Khrushchev thaw" that ended in 1964 was followed by Leonid Brezhnev and his attempt to pursue détente. Détente was sought, as pointed out by Angela Stent (Legvold 2007: 413), for both political as well as economic reasons. In short, the complicated image of the situation in the Soviet Union and the relationship with the West when Brezhnev came to power can be described in the words of Stent (Legvold 2007: 411):

As the USSR progressed from being a European great power at Stalin's death to being a global superpower by Nikita Khrushchev's ouster in 1964, Russia's interactions with Europe became more complex and contradictory, involving elements of cooperation and confrontation.

During the almost two decades in which Brezhnev was the leader of the USSR, there were in other words several waves of tension. Two important events created confrontational situations, such as the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968 and the invasion of Afghanistan in 1979. The invasion of Czechoslovakia by the Warsaw Pact came as a result of the wish of the Czechoslovakian elite to liberalize the communist system in the country. The decision by the Soviet Union to intervene in the name of socialism became known as the "Brezhnev-doctrine".

In 1985, three years after Brezhnev's death, which was followed by a short period where Yuri Andropov and then Konstantin Chernenko were in power, Mikhail Gorbachev became the leader of the Soviet Union. In the words of Alfred J. Rieber (Legvold 2007: 235) what marked Gorbachev's foreign policy was his attempt to "repudiate the so called Brezhnev Doctrine by invoking a new ideal of a "common European home", a bid to end the cultural alienation of the USSR". He was also, according to Stent (Legvold 2007: 394), the only leader who during the three centuries in which Russia/Soviet had been one of the players in the European state system, who actually had involved the country in all three dimensions of the Russia-Europe question. She claims (Legvold 2007: 394) that during Gorbachev's rule, Soviet Russia was engaged in Europe "as an idea, a model and a geopolitical reality". In the end, his attempt to liberalize the communist system by the famous reforms of glasnost and perestroika together with his rejection of the Brezhnev doctrine, which allowed the states in Eastern Europe to break loose from their communist chains, contributed to the collapse of the Soviet

Union. With the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 and the demise of the Soviet Union shortly after, the era of Cold War was over. By the West, Gorbachev was awarded with the Nobel Peace Prize as he “brought the Cold War to a peaceful end” (nobelpeaceprize.org).

The era of Cold War was characterized by waves of tension, by arms race and by the division of the world – the democratic and capitalist West against the communist East. Furthermore, the relationship between the West and Soviet was complex, due to how it was, as pointed out in Stent’s quote, characterized by cooperation as well as confrontations (Legvold 2007: 411). It was under these intricate circumstances that the Russia-NATO relationship was established. Despite the fact that the division of the world during the Cold War was extreme in many ways, the gap between Russia/Soviet and the West was not something new. In Iver B. Neumann and Vincent Pouliot’s article “Untimely Russia: Hysteresis in Russian-Western Relations over the Past Millennium” the development of a Russia different to its Western counter-pieces is discussed. Based on Pierre Bourdieu’s political sociology they wish to identify the patterns behind Russia’s “deep-rooted inclination for untimely diplomacy” (Neumann and Pouliot: 2011: 106). They use the concept of *hysteresis*¹¹ to explain how clashes and mismatches in the realm of international relations occur. In the Russian case they claim that the hysteresis have taken two main forms during the last millennium, which have influenced Russian diplomacy. The first form of hysteresis is the way Russian diplomacy has been considered uncivilized, barbarian and deemed backwards by the West. The explanation for this clash between Western and Russian diplomacy is explained by the dispositions that have been carried over from the period in history when Russia’s contact with non-Europeans was more frequent than its contact with Europeans. The second form for hysteresis is Russia’s attempt to “punch above the country’s weight” in dealings at the international stage. This is explained as a result of the consistent desire to be recognized as an equal by its Western counterparts (Neumann and Pouliot 2011:112-113).

In their study, Neumann and Pouliot, use Nikita Khrushchev as an example for describing the untimely diplomacy under which the Soviet Union suffered. They (Neumann and Pouliot 2011: 131) see his famous shoe banging episode at the United Nations General Assembly in October 1960 as an event which fifty years later “still echoes the perceived lack of sophistication and refinement in Soviet diplomatic practices”. This episode, and what can

¹¹ Neumann and Pouliot (2011: 109) borrow this term from Bourdieu and states that hysteresis is “a mismatch between the dispositions agents embody and the positions they occupy in a given social configuration. It is often at the root of symbolic struggles in social and political life, including those on the international stage.”

be said to be an example of continued political culture and practices, illustrates the distance felt between the Soviet and the West then during the Cold War.

Following the early 1990s, and the years of transition from a communist state system to a market oriented economy - and at the best a quasi-democratic system - was Yeltsin's attempt to bring post-Soviet Russia closer to the West. In the following I will take a closer look at Russia's wish to learn from the Western model and then its steady development of moving away from it. I will also show how the old image of NATO as a foe and as an aggressor, whose aim has always been Russia, continued to play a part in Russian foreign and security politics.

3.4.2 Yeltsin's presidential periods

Boris Yeltsin became the president of Russia after Gorbachev's Union of socialistic states had evaporated, and its 15 republics had become 15 new countries. The confusion and identity search that Russia experienced after it had emerged as a new state as a result of the fall of the USSR, is described by Light (White, Sakwa and Hale: 2010: 225) as follows: "It was unclear that Russia *had* lost an empire, but there was general agreement within the country that Russia had lost its identity when the USSR disintegrated". In 1993 the first Foreign Policy Concept (FPC) was adopted, and the need for a coherent set of principles which could juggle the aspirations of regaining great power status and the reality of its loss of power and influence, was immense. However, according to Light (White, Sakwa and Hale 2010: 229-230), neither the FPC nor the Military Doctrine¹² that was adopted later the same year, actually resulted in a more coherent Russian foreign policy.

In the initial years of post-Soviet Russia, the foreign policy, by the hands of president Yeltsin and his foreign minister Andrei Kozyrev, was influenced by Westernism. This meant that they believed in Russia's ability to participate in the Euro-Atlantic community (Legvold 2007: 111). Together they represented those who thought that Russia did have a place in the West and that they could be a part of what they called a strategic community "from Vancouver to Vladivostok" (Legvold 2007: 109). This optimism also affected Russia's relationship with NATO, and in 1991 Russia joined the North Atlantic Cooperation Council (NACC).

¹² Military Doctrine 1993 can be found here: <http://www.fas.org/nuke/guide/russia/doctrine/russia-mil-doc.html>

It might be worth noting that just like post-Soviet Russia, NATO was also faced with the challenges of redefining its role and its aims as the Cold War had ended. The alliance's main reason for formation and existence had ceased to exist. There was a shared understanding on both sides that it was necessary, in order to secure a peaceful future, that NATO and Russia had to come to an agreement on their relationship and their new roles, a form of reconciliation (Mankoff 2009: 164).

In 1994 Russia became one of the members of NATO's Partnership for Peace (PfP) program. This was a program designed to institutionalize partnerships with NATO for non-members of the alliance. Of importance to the Russian leadership was that this form of cooperation was not a tool that could be used for political integration, but rather the PfP was seen as a program that would contribute to reduced tensions in the NATO-Russia relationship (Mankoff 2009: 165-166). However, there was an abrupt end to this process when NATO decided to include countries from Eastern and Central Europe into the alliance. This decision was received with disbelief from the Russian government, who thought Gorbachev had been promised otherwise by the alliance. In Russia there is a conviction that NATO made a "pledge" not to expand into the area of the previous Warsaw Pact members, while on the other side, NATO officials refuse that has ever happened (Kramer 2009: 39).¹³ Furthermore, this alleged promise given to Gorbachev that NATO would not enlarge in the post-Soviet space has indeed become an image "in Russian official and analytical discussion" of how NATO makes promises that it later breaks (Monaghan 2011: 4). NATO, on its side, claimed that enlargement and inclusion of new members was the best way to stabilize the situation in a Europe. This, however, brought back memories of the Cold War, and as pointed out by Mankoff (2009: 166) "to Moscow NATO remained the NATO of the Cold War and its expansion a sign that the West still sought to contain Russia".

The process of NATO's enlargement was also of importance to Yevgeni Primakov, appointed foreign minister in 1996. His stance on Russia's relationship with the West was much more pragmatic than Kozyrev's had been. He wanted the international system to inhabit the features of multi-polarity and represented a perspective influenced by Eurasianism, though in a mild sense. Primakov also wanted Russia to return as a great power, but understood that even though Russia was not like the West, it had advantages avoiding confrontation and keeping status quo. This is also why, according to Legvold (2007: 5), that

¹³ To read more about the controversial debate about the alleged "pledge" NATO made not to enlarge into the areas of previous Warsaw Pact members, see Mark Kramer's article "The myth of a No-NATO-Enlargement Pledge to Russia" (2009).

when the invitation for Poland, Hungary and the Czech Republic to enter NATO was made official in 1997, the Russian leadership could do nothing but accept the inclusion that followed in 1999. Furthermore, Russia even signed the Founding Act on Mutual Relations, Cooperation and Security in 1997, which formalized the Russia-NATO relationship at a new level and established the Permanent Joint Council (PJC).¹⁴ However, the PJC did not provide the tools needed to enhance communication and cooperation between the alliance and Russia (Åtland 2003:18). And according to Legvold (2007: 5) the Russians never took PJC seriously. As the crisis in the Balkans developed from bad to worse during the last years of the 1990s and NATO decided to intervene in Kosovo in 1999, Russia decided to break all contact with NATO through the PJC (Legvold 2007: 5). This break in relations led to a historical low point, up to this moment, in communication between NATO and Russia¹⁵ (Åtland 2003: 18).

However, the fact that Russia had signed the Founding Act and joined the PJC in the first place, can be seen as Russia's recognition of NATO of the 1990s as something different from NATO during the Cold War. The new NATO was no longer a direct threat to Russia, but with the alliance decision to admit more states and its decision to intervene in Kosovo, the old image of NATO kept reappearing, especially to Russia's political and military elite (Mankoff 2009 :168).

Russian foreign policy during the 1990s was characterized by economic instability and a Russia that suffered the consequences of the collapse of the Soviet Union. During the first part of this decade, dependence on western money as well as expertise was great, but as stated by Neumann and Pouloit (2011: 132) from the mid 1990s "age-old Great Power dispositions resurfaced among policy makers in Moscow, prompting a misalignment with the lower position occupied by the country inside the NATO-dominated field of international security". The differences between Russia and the West during Yeltsin's two presidential terms can safely be said to have been far less than during the Cold War. However, there are still examples of untimely diplomacy, which may be said to highlight the continued gap that still existed. Legvold (2007:119-120) offers descriptions of Yeltsin's appearance in international forums, such as one at the Budapest Summit in December 1994 on the Conference on Security and Cooperation. Here, Yeltsin chose to criticize NATO's - then

¹⁴ Founding Act on Mutual Relations, Cooperation and Security between NATO and the Russian Federation Paris, 27 May 1997 can be read here: http://www.nato-russia-council.info/OffDocs_Detail.aspx?OffDocsID=1174

¹⁵ In his study Åtland uses the term *transaction* and *transaction density* in dealing with communication on different subjects such as politics and economy. See his research paper "Russlands Forhold til NATO og EU: På vei mot et sikkerhetsfellesskap?"(2003) for more information.

possible - enlargement by suggesting that such an action would threaten the stability of Europe and the democratic development in Russia. According to Legvold (2007:119) Yeltsin at this summit even made Bill Clinton startled with his harsh and menacing language talking about NATO's enlargement as a "reprise of Cold War divisions". This may be seen as an example that displays the differences in Russian and Western diplomacy that played out also within the Russia-NATO relationship.

Towards the end of Yeltsin's second term, Prime Minister Valdimir Putin took over the post as president of the Russian Federation, and was then elected for the two next presidential terms.

3.4.3 Putin's first presidential period

When Putin came to power, Russia had yet to recover from the transition of the 1990s. Therefore, his foreign policy during the first years as president, reflected the need for domestic stability and economic growth. As pointed out by MacFarlane (Braun 2008: 44), one of the main elements in the foreign policy discourse in Russia at this time was that of *partnership*. This meant cooperation with both the US and Europe in the West, and China in the East. Some observers would even describe the return to alignment with the West during the beginning of Putin's presidency as a sign that Russia now had turned its back completely to the elements of its identity rooted in its history with Asia. Tsygakov (2010: 19) states that great power status remained important to Putin during his first years, but also describes the process that developed as one where it turned away from "the policy of balancing against the West". According to him (Tsygakov 2010: 19), Putin "explicitly sided with Europe and the United States and insisted that Russia was a country of European and Western, rather than, Asian identity".

Only few months after he was elected president in March 2000, a new Foreign Policy concept was adopted, replacing the one from 1993.¹⁶ According to Light (White, Sakwa and Hale 2010: 231) the new FPC focused on predictability and consistency in Russian foreign policy, as well as it highlighted the importance of pragmatism, which it stated ought to serve as a mutual advantage in the international system.

With respect to Russia's relationship with NATO, the FPC of 2000 stated that Russia still held a negative position on the subject of the eastward enlargement of the alliance

¹⁶ The Foreign Policy Concept of 2000 can be read here:
<http://www.mid.ru/Bl.nsf/arh/1EC8DC08180306614325699C003B5FF0?OpenDocument>

which took place in 1999. The FPC had, according to Legvold (2007: 317), an overall negative tone against NATO and declared that there was a conflict between Russia's security interests and the interests of the alliance. Further, the National Security Concept,¹⁷ a document that was adopted the same year as the new FPC, also referred to the enlargement of NATO and deemed it one of Russia's "major threats" in terms of national security (Legvold 2007:310). However, as Legvold (2007: 310) further points out, there were no suggestions or specifications as to any measures that should have been applied to stop NATO and its growing sphere of influence. Hence, he believes, that this reflects how the Russian government had come to terms with the development that resulted in a new wave of enlargement in 2004, and that the Russian leadership understood that it was not in position to prevent it.

The terrorist attack on the US September 11th in 2001, has in hindsight been described as a watershed in Russia's relationship with the West. The event put international terrorism on the agenda, and it opened up for new forms of cooperation. Putin famously declared that Russia would fight together with the West in the "war against terror" (Åtland 2003: 14). This cooperation also affected Russia's relationship with NATO. The will to fight terror, and stand alongside the West while doing it, resulted in tighter bonds between NATO and Russia, and in May 2002 the NATO-Russia Council (NRC) was established (Åtland 2003: 15). The NRC was to formalize the cooperation NATO had with Russia through a better institutionalized form than that of the PJC. The goal was to create a forum where Russia could have a say in the process of negotiation, as it had complained over the so-called "16+1 format" of the PJC. This format meant that, in practice, Russia hardly had any influence in the decision making. Hence, the NRC was seen as an opportunity to enhance its position when it came to making decisions on security policy with NATO (Mankoff 2009: 169).

Like Tsygakov, Shevtsova (2010: 50) recognizes that during the two first years as president of the Russian Federation, Putin reached the peak in his pro-Western orientation. However, she is – as many with her – convinced that the role Russia attained as a partner in fighting terror during these years, in part was a result of its wish to legitimize the much criticized war it lead in Chechnya – not a sign of Russia's leaders having chosen a European identity for the country. Further, Shevtsova believes that the pro-Western stance that Russia

¹⁷ The National Security Concept of 2000 can be read here: <http://www.mid.ru/ns-osndoc.nsf/1e5f0de28fe77fdcc32575d900298676/36aba64ac09f737fc32575d9002bbf31?OpenDocument>

led in the early years of 2000, was limited to a partnership that did not take into account the “civilizational dimension”. By this she means that the cooperation and partnership Russia sought with the West “contained a rejection of the values of Western civilization” and she emphasizes the internal development of Russia during these years to demonstrate this point (Shevstova 2010: 48). To her, the process of centralization of power by eliminating all potential challengers on the political stage and the establishment of Putin’s “power vertical”, confirm this belief. Åtland (2003:15) also points at the fact that there seemed to be no interest from either side in developing a common interpretation of what international terror really meant, possibly due to fear of jeopardizing the historical new partnership.

The atmosphere in the relationship between Russia and the West, and notably between Russia and NATO, during Putin’s first term as president caused optimism and belief in that the time of confrontation had ended. However, the Russian elite – with Putin at the front – had not forgotten the image of Russia as a great power, but they had understood the importance of recovering, ensuring stabilization and economic growth before pursuing this vision further. Mankoff describes the strategic choices during this period in these words (2009:24):

In bandwagoning with the United States after September 11, 2001, and seeking to minimize quarrels with the West thereafter, Putin made a strategic calculation that international cooperation – along with restoring the domestic base of Russian strength – was the most effective means of recapturing Russia’s lost global influence.

During Putin’s first term there was a growing sense of optimism in the West. And the prospects of a Russia that could be a liberal democracy, which the West could cooperate with and trust as it was one of their own, still seemed within reach. However, towards the end of Putin’s first term and during the beginning of his second, the picture slowly started to change. And as discussed above, while some believed Russia was on its way to fully engage in a European identity, some have declared it only a strategic choice, where Russia acted according to Western expectations in order to attain domestic stabilization and growth.

3.4.4 Putin’s second presidential period

The contours of a Russia moving in a different direction than many in the West had hoped and believed, became more visible in Putin’s second term. Several events during the year 2006, which by observers have been pointed out as the year when Russia’s new self-

confidence started showing for real, further confirmed Russia's growing assertiveness. This development is closely linked with the economic upturn experienced in Russia due to the world market's high prices of oil and gas at the time. As pointed out by Mankoff (2010: 32), the "economic transformation" turned the tables around, as it enabled Russia to pay off its debt both to the IMF and other Western creditors, at the same time as Russia had become an energy power which the European countries now were reliant on. This gave reason to feel that the West's nose had nothing to do in Russia's internal affairs anymore (Legvold 2007: 125). The new self-confidence became world known at the Munich Security Conference in February 2007. Here, Putin held his famous speech where he, according to Trenin (2009: 70) "made clear that Russia no longer accepted the rules of the game set up after the collapse of the Soviet Union, when Russia was weak". He also made his Western counterparts jump when he attacked NATO with US at the front, and made "provocative allusions to the Third Reich" (Braun 2008: 56). This speech may also be seen as an example of untimely diplomacy linked to Neumann and Pouloit's notion of the perceived gap that seems not to ever really have closed between Russia and the West. Moreover, the aspirations for being treated like an equal resulted in fear, not respect from its counter-pieces.

Furthermore, during Putin's second term the new objectives were clear: the Russian leadership wanted equality with both the US and the EU at the same time as it wanted "soft dominance" in its "near abroad" (Trenin 2009: 64). After having been in no position to fight for influence in the areas of the previous Soviet Union due to domestic challenges up until this point, the strong growth in Russia's economy and the political stable situation made it claim its interests with more force than previously. As pointed out by Lawrence T. Caldwell (Legvold 2007: 313), the "loss of leverage" in these areas had been a sensitive matter for a long time. And in 2004, the second round of NATO enlargement led to massive protests. As the first time around, the Russian government had not been able to prevent the development of round two from taking pace. The enlargement of NATO eastward in 2004 deserves to be treated with special attention, as the event is an important part of the debate about NATO in the Russian newspapers from 2004. This round of new memberships included the three Baltic states of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania, which were all previous Soviet republics with borders to Russia. According to Mankoff (2009:170), their inclusion in the alliance put off a "firestorm" within the political elite in Russia. However, it may worth noting that the resistance against the prospect of having NATO members on its borders was not a geographically rooted problem. One example of this is how Norway, which also borders with

Russia, has been a member of NATO since the alliance was established. The Baltic countries were, however, previous republics of the Soviet Union, which now clearly marked their change in priority and loyalty. In addition, there was a disagreement due to the fact that these new members of NATO had not ratified the new CFE Treaty (Mankoff: 170-171).¹⁸

The enlargement of NATO, and its steady move towards Russia's borders have been looked upon as an event that caused tension in Russia's relationship with NATO. However, some see the need to counterbalance this view. According to Shevtsova (2010: 140), in Russia the "most popular international tale told" is the story of NATO's enlargement (together with the Kosovo crisis) as the reason behind the strained relationship with the West. The tale, she states, is used by the Russian elite in order to play on the European guilt as well as it effectively supports "the militaristic syndrome in Russian society" (2010:140). No matter what perspective is chosen, though, the fact that relations between Russia and the West in general, and Russia and NATO in particular, soured during Putin's second term, seems to be clear.

After the 2004 enlargement, the tensions between Russia and NATO continued to worsen, especially in terms of influence in the areas of the previous USSR. Caldwell (Legvold 2007: 313) points at a number of events that occurred during 2006, where Russia tried to strengthen its position in its near abroad, such as the gas dispute with Ukraine and a boycott of Georgian and Moldavian wine, which led to an increased level of tension between Russia and the West. The episode with Ukraine, where Russia turned off its gas deliveries to the country, is said to be rooted in the events of the Orange revolution when the pro-Western Viktor Yushchenko was elected president in 2004. He had won the election on the basis of his Western-friendly policy where independence from Russia played a significant part. He had also opened up for the process of seeking membership in European and Western institutions – including NATO. The gas dispute was officially an attempt to make Ukraine pay market price for its gas, but it also marked a turn in Russian foreign policy as it had decided to remind Ukraine of its dependence on Russia (Mankoff 2009: 24-25). The importance of Ukraine and Georgia to Russia has become clear as both countries have shown will to move closer to the West and further away from Russia's influence. A development they signaled to the world with the color revolutions. The development made the Russian government take

¹⁸ The CFE Treaty (Treaty on Conventional armed Forces in Europe) was signed in 1990 and its goal was to control the presence of military units that were placed within the territories of the countries who signed the agreement (Mankoff 2009: 170). In 1999 the treaty was revised at the Istanbul summit. However, as NATO members at the time believed that Russia had not followed its promise regarding troops in Georgia and Moldova they had not ratified the revised CFE treaty (NATO.int: A).

action in order to show that it was a process it did not agree with, and there was no way it would sponsor the change by supplying Ukraine with gas well beneath market price (Mankoff 2009: 24).

In addition, within the same year, several events marked the distance between Russia and the West. In 2006, the journalist Anna Politkovskaya and the dissident and former KBG agent, Aleksandr Litvinenko were killed, and while the Russian government claimed it had nothing to do with any of these murders, it nonetheless created an atmosphere that made the West uneasy (Mankoff 2009: 25).

Russia, under the lead of Putin showed that dealing with the West did not necessarily mean adjusting to their values, goals and use it as a model to shape its institutions or society. Concerning the different schools of thought, Legvold (2007: 110) is of the opinion that there are reasons to claim that Putin may belong to the spectre of moderate Eurasianists - "at least when he rises some mornings". However, he (Legvold 2007: 111) further points out, that during Putin's time as a president there were two elements to his foreign policy that does not fit this characterization. The first being the way he has emphasized Russia's natural attachment to Europe, and second that he does not seem to share the rejection of globalization of the Eurasianists. At the same time, it can be worth mentioning how the changes and the new tone, which the Russian government took on in the two periods of Putin's presidency, did not happen as a mere result of new goals that were established during this period. They took place as a result of the changes in its circumstances that allowed Russia to reach for its goals (Mankoff 2009: 7-8).

3.4.5 Medvedev's first presidential period

During president Medvedev's close to three years in office from 2008 until the end of 2010, the war with Georgia in the summer of 2008 has been the event that has influenced the Russia-NATO relationship the greatest. Using the term "conflict" between Russia and NATO after this episode would seem exaggerated, however, the level of tension was high and formal cooperation through the NRC was suspended as a result of it (NATO.int: B). In addition to this break in relations, however, there were attempts to resume contact with NATO and to restore the partnership under Medvedev's rule. President Medvedev was also present at NATO's Lisbon summit in November 2010, a symbolic performance for the continuation of building Russia-NATO relations.

The priorities of Russia's foreign policy in these last years are stated in the new and updated version of Putin's Foreign Policy Concept, from 2008.¹⁹ According to Mankoff (2009: 13), the revised FPC shares about 80 percent of the text with its previous version. However, some of the changes that were made are worth mentioning. One of the changes that have been seen as important is the removal of the term "great power" from the Concept. Russia is instead referred to as "one of the leading centers of the contemporary world" (Mankoff 2009: 13). In addition, the 2008 FPC is supposedly also less concerned with the importance of its close neighbors. However, the invasion of Georgia was to many a sign that this was indeed still of great significance.

Further, shortly after the conflict with Georgia had ended, Medvedev illustrated Russia's priorities within the sphere of its foreign policy, as he declared five guiding principles that later have been given the term the "Medvedev Doctrine". These principles were not entirely new, but they stated Russian goals more explicitly than what they perhaps had been done previously, causing skepticism in the West (Mankoff 2009: 31-32). The five principles evolved around, firstly, Russia's acknowledgment of the "supremacy of the basic principles of international law". Secondly, the Doctrine declared a wish to see the world as multi-polar, due to how a world "dominated by one power" is unstable (the "one power" reflects the resistance to US's role in a contemporary world). Thirdly, it states that Russia does not seek "confrontation with any country". Fourthly, and a contested principle in the West, deals with Russian citizens and the importance of aiding them with protection "wherever they are located". Also the fifth principle caused a negative reaction from Western commentators, as it sounded obsolete to claim that Russia had regions "in which it maintains privileged interests" (Mankoff 2009: 31). However, although the principles might have caused skepticism, at least Moscow was stating its objectives out loud.

Furthermore, by looking at the war between Russia and Georgia in 2008, there are a few aspects that can be claimed important in understanding the development of the relationship between Russia and NATO. The development that led to the final decision to go to war had been ongoing for a while, and was sparked by a whole range of factors, including Russia's stance on its role as a protector of Russian citizens of which there are many in the disputed areas of South Ossetia and Abkhazia. Further, the Rose revolution of 2003 and then-elected president Mikheil Saakashvili's announcement of Georgia's wish to apply for NATO

¹⁹ Foreign Policy Concept of 2008 can be read here:
<http://archive.kremlin.ru/eng/text/docs/2008/07/204750.shtml>

membership, were part of this development of worsening relations between Russia and Georgia (White, Sakwa and Hale 2010:237). The war marked a shift in Russian foreign policy as it chose to use military force in order to secure its interests. Further, seen in a larger foreign policy context, the decision to go to war with Georgia can be described in the words of Shevtsova (2010: 81) as “mainly a pretext for the Kremlin to secure a more assertive Russian role in the world, reformulate its relations with the West, and force the United States to agree to the new world order, at least in the former Soviet space”. In addition, Mankoff (2009: 7) points at how the path that Putin and Medvedev chose for Russia up to the invasion of Georgia was not new, or in itself more threatening, but that Russia “has merely recovered enough to act in a way that even most Yeltsinites desired” (Mankoff 2009:7).

The Russia-NATO relationship did, as already pointed out, suffer from Russia’s invasion of Georgia. In September 2008, the NATO members decided to suspend the communication in some areas with Russia, in terms of formal meetings and cooperation, through the NRC “while it considered the implications of Russia’s actions for the NATO-Russia relationship” (NATO.int: C). It took approximately a year before the NATO countries decided to resume formal contact with Russia through the NRC, and the first formal meeting at ministerial level after the contact had been suspended took place in December 2009 (NRC.info).

Towards the end of 2010, the Russia-NATO relationship seemed to undergo a new cooperative wave, and the break in 2008-2009 was followed by a return to a softer approach from Russia’s side. At the third summit of the NRC, at Lisbon in November 2010, the member countries together with Russia stated a common wish for a new improved strategic partnership and completed the Joint Review of Twenty First Century Common Security Challenges.²⁰ According to Monaghan (2011: 2), the review had a dual purpose, as it attempted both to change perceptions into a shared view of NATO and Russia’s common threats and challenges, and identified five different cooperation projects.²¹

Although the summit in Lisbon created a new sense of optimism in the Russia-NATO relationship, there are still differences that surface and strain the cooperation. One important difference is how NATO and Russia has dissimilar perspectives on what lies in the term partnership, and there is also lack of common understanding of the concept

²⁰ To read about the summit: http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/news_68876.htm, and The joint statement can be read here: www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/news_68871.htm

²¹ 1: “cooperation in Afghanistan, including counter-narcotics”, 2: “non-proliferation of WMD and their means of delivery”, 3: “counter-piracy”, 4: “counter-terrorism” and 5: “disaster response” (Monaghan 2011: 2).

“indivisibility of security” (Monaghan 2011: 3). This means that the Russian perception of what cooperation within the field of security holds, may not always correspond to what NATO believes fall within the partnership. From the NATO point of view, national, European, Eurasian and global security is linked to each other and states should be free to choose its alliance. This view also holds that no state has “a sphere of privileged interests” and that “security within *states* is as much a part of security between states” (Monaghan 2011: 3). However, in Russian ears this sounds off beat, and sees this as fragmentation of security. It expects legally binding commitments, because without it “Moscow sees Euro-Atlantic security as rendered “divisible”” (Monaghan 2011: 3).

Further, despite the wave of cooperation and a return to a softer approach to the West, after the growing assertiveness during the end of Putin’s second presidency, there are still reasons to claim that there are still challenges in the Russia-NATO relationship. Monaghan (2011:4) points at two factors that cause problems in the NATO-Russia relations. The first being that of Russian scepticism to NATO with respect to what it considers being a gap in what the alliance says it will do and what it actually does. This, Monaghan claims (2011: 4), can be seen as mistrust rooted back all the way to the alleged promise Russians believe was given to Gorbachev considering enlargement and eastward movement of the alliance. The second factor that clouds the relationship, is the lack of influence Russia feels it has on NATO’s decisions. The NRC was, as mentioned above, meant to create a forum different from the “16+1” format of the PJC. However, according to Monaghan (2011: 4) seen with Russian eyes, the NRC still has a “+1” format, which results in Russian suggestions being rejected or even ignored.

During Medvedev’s first presidency there has been a distinct wave of tension from a definite peak during the war with Georgia to a softer approach following the financial crisis which hit the country hard during the fall of 2008. It now claims it has recovered well from the crisis, and it still remains to see whether this will cause a new wave of assertive foreign policy. It might be worth noting that, when assessing the first three years of Medvedev’s first presidency, there doesn’t seem to be many examples where he has caused Western colleagues to jump due to untimely diplomacy. This might be one of the reasons why Medvedev has been seen as more “Western-friendly” and suited to deal with matters of foreign policy, than his predecessors.

3.5 Public opinion about NATO

As has been illustrated by looking at the history of the Russia-NATO relationship, there have been several waves of increasing and decreasing level of tensions. And since the time of the Cold War, Russia's relationship with the West consisted of both elements of cooperation as well as of confrontation. This description also reflects Russia's relationship with NATO. After having looked at how Russia-NATO relations have developed since the time of the Cold War and until 2010, it might also be worth assessing the public opinion in Russia about NATO before moving on to the analysis of the debate in the Russian newspapers. In a study done by the Levada Centre,²² the development of attitudes towards NATO from 1999 to 2009 is assessed (russiavotes.org). In the survey one question asked "what meets Russia's interests best" and in terms of "admission to NATO", 10 percent thought this favourable to Russia in 1999, in contrast to 3 percent in 2009. The trend was a steady decline in this approach each year. Further, "cooperation with NATO" was in 1999 and 2009 seen as positive for Russia by 22 and 23 percent respectively. But what is interesting is the increase in 2003, when as many as 43 percent believed that cooperation with NATO would be a good alternative for Russia. This can be seen as a result of Putin's policy in the beginning of his first presidential period, where he emphasized good relations with NATO through the battle against terrorism and as means of strengthening Russia's domestic situation.

Furthermore, another interesting point can be made in terms of the role NATO plays in the foreign policy discourse in Russia. A survey done by the Levada Centre in 2011 shows that in January this year, 23 percent of those asked, perceived NATO as an adversary to Russia (atlantic-community.org). In contrast, 42 percent answered that Chechen rebels posed a danger to Russia. Thus, the image of Russia's natural adversary have changed, and as pointed out by Julie Wilhelmsen (2011) the image of Russia's "other" has been altered as the perceived threat to Russia concerns Chechnya, rather than the West. This may be said to contribute to placing the analysis of the debate about NATO in Russia in a larger context. Because even though the perspectives on NATO are central aspects of Russia's foreign policy, it is important to note that there are other issues that concerns both the Russian leadership and the public more.

²² As the English version of Levada's site (<http://old.levada.ru/eng/index.html>) is currently under construction (2011.10.22) the surveys referred to are available at RussiaVotes: <http://www.russiavotes.org/>.

3.6 Before the analysis

From looking both at some important aspects of Russia's identity in terms of its foreign policy and the history of the Russia-NATO relationship, some concluding remarks may be done in relations to the analysis of the NATO discourse in the Russian newspapers, which follows in the next chapter. The relationship between Russia and NATO has at times flourished and other at other times stagnated. During the Cold War the Soviet Union and NATO were each other's main adversaries. Following the demise of the USSR, the Russian Federation has struggled to find its place on the international arena. For many Russians the transformation of the 1990s not only led to financial difficulties and a new way of life, it also meant that their identity as citizens of the Soviet Union - a great power and one of the two poles in a bipolar world - abruptly lost its meaning. Being Russian was synonymous with being a Soviet citizen, and Russia itself was for many the same as the Soviet Union. Thus, in the aftermath of the demise of the Soviet Union the loss of the Soviet identity led to what has been described above as an "identity crises" with respect to the development of the foreign policy in Russia. This chapter has further illustrated how great power aspirations, Russia's relationship with the West and its "near abroad" were continuing elements important in the process of creating a post-Soviet Russian identity. This has had implications for its relationship with NATO, especially considering NATO's enlargements and the process of making partnerships with previous members of the Soviet Union, in areas where Russia considers its role as unique.

From the early 1990s until the end of the first decade of this millennium, the Russia-NATO relationship has been through different phases. With Yeltsin, the post-Soviet Russia, which suffered from economic distress due to the transformation, tied closer bonds with the West and established a partnership with NATO. During Putin's first term, September 11th and the war against terror marked a new area for the relationship. While some observers thought Russia finally had decided to turn completely towards the West, other saw it as means to create domestic stability and economic growth. Putin's second presidential term was characterized by events that one after the other made the relationship with the West and NATO increasingly strained. However, it was the events of the summer of 2008 that marked a definite highpoint in confrontational tensions, as Russia went to war with Georgia. The episode happened only months into Medvedev's first presidency and in the very beginning of the establishment of the "power-tandem" consisting of Medvedev as president and Putin as Russia's most prominent prime minister so far. Russia-NATO relations were suspended at

formal level through the NRC as a result of the war, and the event marked a peak in tensions in the relationship. Following this break, however, the partnership between NATO and Russia has been reestablished, beginning slowly in 2009 and continuing into 2010. At the Lisbon summit in November 2010 the relationship reached a new phase, and in their Joint Statement they pointed out how they now “have embarked on a new stage of cooperation towards a true strategic partnership” (NATO.int: D).

Russian foreign policy, in terms of NATO relations, can be said to have been influenced both by important events in the relationship, but also by the driving forces in Russian foreign policy. Therefore, the events linked to NATO’s enlargement and increased influence in areas of Russia’s “near abroad” has played an important role in the NATO discourse in Russian newspapers, as will be illustrated in the thesis’ next chapter.

Chapter Four: The NATO debate

Part 1: Main concerns

2004-2010

4.0 Overview of the main topics

Between 2004 and 2010, hundreds of articles about NATO were written in Rossiskaya Gazeta, Nezavisimaya Gazeta and Novaya Gazeta. Out of these, I have read 206 articles for this thesis. Before studying the NATO debate more in depth, in the following the thesis will offer a short the overview of the debate in terms of the differences between the papers, the number of articles studied versus the number of articles available, and the main topics and concerns about NATO in the newspapers during this period. From this, a description of the overall development of the debate may be given. First, the profile of each paper will be discussed by looking at the way they present themselves to their readers versus the image I was left with as a result of the analysis. Then, an overview of each paper from 2004 until 2010 is offered, by looking at what has characterized the debate in each of them during these years.

4.1 The newspapers' profiles

According to Rossiskaya Gazeta (rg.ru) the paper had its first publication in November 1990 and was established by “the new Russian government”. It classifies itself as an official newspaper, meaning that: “the publications here are in effect official documents” (rg.ru). Thus, there is no doubt that the newspaper presents the official line, also in the matters of foreign policy and the relationship with NATO. After having read 58 relevant articles from this paper, the image I was left with to a large degree confirms its profile as a newspaper that is directly linked to the Russian government. The way it presented the official view in terms of its relationship with NATO, was on most matters by the use of quotes from Russian officials, or just by referring to their statements. This resulted in an image of Russia's relationship with NATO that to a large extent followed the official line from 2004 until the end of 2010. It did not offer many surprises. There was a lack of analysis and comments on official statements, and the only personal notes given, could be found in the many comments

and articles written by Sergey Karaganov. Karaganov is the publisher of *Russia in Global Affairs* and is described by Lilia Shevtsova (2010: 115) as one of the Russian experts which belong to the “moderate, balanced or even Westernizing voices in Russia”. However, according to her (Shevtsova 2010: 136), he is also attempting to “reconcile the irreconcilable” as he is striving to follow the official stand of Moscow while he at the same time is “warning against hewing to that line too closely”. One example of Karaganov’s contribution to debate in the paper, was how he in one article criticized the US for using the mechanisms of NATO in order to make Russia a scarecrow to keep Europe disciplined (rg.ru 2006.12.20). Also, the statements of Russia’s permanent representative to NATO since 2008, Dmitry Rogozin, offers a more personal tone in the paper’s articles between 2008 and 2010, for example through numerous of interviews.

Nezavisimaya Gazeta sees itself as “one of the major periodical papers in modern Russia” and according to its own profile, it covers “issues of social, political and cultural life, both in Russia and abroad” (ng.ru). To a large extent the articles read for this analysis was found in the politics section of the paper (“NG-Politics”). This is described as a section which discusses “the most urgent” problems in modern politics, and has as a goal not just to publish “analytical materials written by prominent politicians and political scientist”, but to offer a sharp look at the official line by for example “monitoring of the most controversial political events” (ng.ru). After having read 87 relevant articles from this paper, it is clear that it offered a diverse image of NATO and the alliance’s role in relations to Russia. Not all articles offered a thorough analysis of Russia’s relationship with the alliance, but NG did comment on official statements to a larger degree than *Rossiskaya Gazeta*. One of the reasons why the paper can be said to represent more varied perspectives on NATO, was the frequently published articles by both Russian as well as foreign experts. These articles have been included in the analysis because the paper has made the choice to print them. The experts use these articles as a tool to get their opinions heard, and the opinions uttered are both negative and positive towards NATO, as well as to how Moscow deals with the alliance. These varying images of the alliance and Russia’s relationship with it, are representative of the image I have of the paper; one that lets a large range of perspectives be heard.

Novaya Gazeta does not, as the other two have “about the paper” information on its website. Instead, it offers a small story of how it came about: a group of journalists dreaming about making a new Russian newspaper (novayagazeta.ru). This different way to present itself, may be said to be in line with the image of the paper as one that offers new

perspectives both on NATO and on Russia. After having read 61 relevant articles from this paper, it can be claimed that it provided its readers with more analysis of the Russia-NATO relationship in general, but also in terms of the political situation in Russia particular, than the two other papers. Articles in Novaya used the debate about NATO in order to criticize a development in Russia that it opposed.

4.1.1 Main concerns from 2004 until 2010

In general, it can be said that the debate about NATO from 2004 until 2010 reflected the main events in the Russia-NATO relationship, which have been described in the background chapter. Rossiskaya Gazeta often had articles that referred to certain meetings, events or happenings, whilst Nezavisimaya Gazeta did the same but added articles where the relationship between Russia and NATO was discussed or the role and the future of NATO was commented. The latter also goes for Novaya Gazeta, which used the events to ask critical questions, often related to Russia's path forward. As described in the introduction, the choice of articles studied for the analysis was made on the basis of their perceived relevance for the debate after having acquired background information on the period, as well as on the basis of what was seen as the main topics out of all the articles available in each paper every year.

Looking at the articles written in 2004, one event overshadowed all other, namely NATO's second round of enlargement after the end of the Cold War, which included the previous republics of the Soviet Union, Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia. However, this is not the only topic treated in the papers. In 2004, RG, under its NATO-tag has 38 articles concerning NATO, of which 10 was read for the analysis. These, in addition to the alliance's enlargement, also covered the role played by NATO in Kosovo, Iraq and Afghanistan. The impression of the official stand on NATO from RG this year is that following the 2004-enlargement there were indeed signs of dispute, which caused tension in the relationship. However, there was also focus on cooperation and on the diplomatic skills of Putin in relations to the alliance.

NG has 64 articles under its NATO-tag in 2004, of which 14 were read for this study. In addition to the enlargement, NATO's relationship with both Ukraine and Georgia was treated, as well as the challenges with the CFE treaty. As mentioned earlier, when it comes to Novaya, this paper's online site does not have the same possibilities for article search as the others, and thus the exact number of articles for each year is not that easily found. However the trend has been a lower number of articles than in the two other papers,

but it often treated the same topics as the two. For 2004 the number of articles read was 7, several of them related to the enlargement.

From reading 7 of the 10 articles available under the NATO-tag in RG in 2005, the relationship between Russia and NATO appeared to be one of good relations. Russia and NATO cooperation on different projects was highlighted, but the situation with both Ukraine and Kirgizstan as partners to NATO was treated with skepticism. The importance of the area of previous Soviet republics can also be seen from the 49 articles written in NG under its NATO-tag, and from the 15 articles read for the analysis. As the abovementioned papers, Novaya was also concerned with matters such as Georgia and Ukraine and their wish to turn westwards. However, in contrast to the other papers, Novaya seemed preoccupied with Belarus as only alternative Russia would have left if its neighbors continued to turn its back to it.

The importance of the developments in Georgia and Ukraine following the color revolutions was, as described in the background chapter, significant to the Russian government. And this was also reflected in the papers' coverage of NATO. In RG in 2006, many of the 22 articles under the general NATO-tag are also to be found under the "NATO and enlargement"-tag. But from looking at articles from the overall NATO-tag this year, and analyzing 6 of them, it was clear that there were also other topics of interest. Such as the Russian leadership's wish to cooperate with NATO through CSTO, problems due to disagreement over the CFE treaty as well as concern over NATO patrolling in the Baltic airspace.

Further, in NG the same year, the countries of the CIS in relation to NATO was of continued importance, and two countries, Georgia and Ukraine, were treated with a keen interest. Out of the 84 articles available at the paper's link to articles on NATO, 14 were read for this analysis. As described in the background chapter, a process of cooling in relations between NATO and Russia was taking place at this time. The paper seems to have tried to counterbalance the negativity and let a number of foreign experts publish their articles, which focused upon need to continue cooperation between Russia and the alliance.

From Novaya, 8 articles were read in 2006. These mainly treated the same topics as the other two, especially the situation of closer integration between NATO and Georgia and Ukraine. The development of other previous republics of the Soviet Union in Central Asia looking towards the West and NATO, were also important topics.

In 2007, the level of tension between Russia and the West increased with the US plans for an antimissile system (ABM) in the Czech Republic and in Poland, and with the decision by Russia to withdraw from the CFE treaty. This is reflected in RG's articles, and the new tag "Building of ABM in Europe" was observed for the first time under the umbrella of the NATO-tag. Reading the 8 of the 18 articles from RG this year gave an impression of a steady rising level of tension. This could also be observed in NG's 73 articles from 2007, including from the 12 read for this analysis. In addition, a number of articles were preoccupied with Ukraine, Georgia, and other post-Soviet republics and their relationship with NATO. Further, Afghanistan and the situation in Kosovo was treated as a topics within the NATO debate.

From the 8 articles read from Novaya in 2007, the impression was that the topics were related to the abovementioned, as a result of the development towards a more assertive Russian foreign policy at this time. Further, one article from 2007 illustrated the paper's concerns in the Russia-NATO relationship by looking at several events which caused strains to the relationship, such as the killing of Aleksander Litvinenko, the problems with the CFE treaty, American bases in Europe and the dispute over the independence of Kosovo (novayagazeta.ru 2007.07.30).

As have been illustrated in the previous chapter, from the middle of Putin's second presidency, Russia showed muscles internationally as a result of a boost in the country's economy due to high prices on oil and gas. This process continued into Medvedev's first period, with the war in Georgia. In 2008, the war in itself was not the main topic in relations to NATO, although it was of course treated in all of the three newspapers. In the case of RG, for the whole year, 59 articles were to be found under the NATO-tag. From looking at these articles, including the 10 read for the analysis, the NATO debate in RG to a large extent was preoccupied with the results of the Bucharest summit in April that year, which was when the decision on possible memberships of Ukraine and Georgia was taken. However, the war with Georgia was also treated, although it seems as though the situation at the end of the year, when NATO and Russia attempted to resume some contact again, was of more importance than the war itself.

2008 was also the year when NG reached a peak in the number of articles written about NATO. The number was 232, of which 14 were read for the analysis, and they treated a whole range of subjects. However, a pattern can be traced, and the main area of interest this year was without doubt Georgia. Articles were also concerned with NATO's mission in

Afghanistan, and on the alliance presence in the previous Soviet republics as a result of it, such as in Kirgizstan. Further, there was still an interest around the CFE treaty and the ABM system. However, at the end of the year, hope of reconnecting with NATO again can also be seen. In Novaya, there were also more articles on NATO this year than the previous, and 13 were read for this study. Several of the articles were concerned with Ukraine and Georgia, and how the Russian government attempted to hinder their integration with the West through NATO.

In 2009 and 2010 there was a movement towards resuming contact and looking forward in the Russia-NATO relationship. This is reflected in the newspapers' contribution on NATO in this period. During the year 2009, the number of articles available under the NATO-tag at RG was 99, but to a larger extent than before, many of these were just small updates written only for the internet edition or for local publications. It seems that after the end of 2008, NATO was not a subject treated with as much of an interest as it was earlier. Furthermore, in 2010, the RG had 46 articles under the NATO-tag and out of these 14 were written in November, the month of the Lisbon summit, illustrating its perceived importance. The 6 articles read for the analysis dealt with the summit and the possibilities for cooperation in the future.

Further, NG still had a large number of articles in 2009 and 2010, 169 and 194 respectively. In 2009 the relationship between NATO and Georgia and Ukraine was still given attention. So were the main topics already highlighted through the last years, but of special interest was NATO's new secretary general, Anders Fogh Rasmussen. The softening in relations can also be seen in from the 169 articles available and the 10 articles analyzed. In 2010, NG followed the trend in RG with articles about softening in relations and focus on the Lisbon summit in November that year. The difference between RG and NG during these years was that the last of the two treated these subjects from different perspectives and did not state facts only, it discussed the challenges of a continued mutual mistrust in the relationship.

Reading 8 articles from 2009 and 8 from 2010 in Novaya, it can be said that the articles were concerned with the same as those in the two other papers, with the process of resuming contact as a major topic. Novaya published several articles that tried to evaluate and analyze the development of the Russia-NATO relationship, and the process it had gone through the last decade, including possibilities and challenges ahead.

4.2 Preparing for analysis

The overview given above may be seen as an introduction to the more in depth analysis, which follows in the next part of the chapter. By examining the overall development of the NATO debate, some remarks can be made with respect to the questions asked in the introduction. Firstly, this overview has given insight on the most important issues in the NATO debate, in terms of what both the official Russian newspaper and the two more independent papers have been preoccupied with during this period. This is why, in the next part the thesis will look at the aspect of the debate linked to perspectives on the enlargement of the alliance.

Secondly, it can also be worth noting that the overview has shown that the debate to a large degree has followed the general trend where the level of tension rose from the initial years of Putin's second presidency until it peaked in 2008. Then a period of decreasing level of tension, and attempts to normalize the Russia-NATO relationship, followed. This softening of relations also coincides with the time of the change in Russian presidency. The patterns and trends which have been illustrated in this short overview will be discussed more in depth in the chapter's next part. By analyzing the main concerns of the debate about NATO, the aim is to reveal perspectives on the alliance that can be useful in the process of understanding how NATO is perceived in Russia.

Part two: Analysis of the debate

4.3 The analysis

As illustrated above, by looking at the overall development of the NATO debate in the three Russian newspapers from 2004 until 2010, some issues could be said to constitute the debate's main concerns. Therefore, as already pointed out, the more in depth analysis of the debate that follows in this part, will treat the aspect of enlargement of NATO. The term enlargement reflects both the actual inclusion of new countries to NATO, as well as the increasing influence of the alliance in Russia's "near abroad".

Thus, first perspectives on the 2004 enlargement will be treated, before turning to the battle for influence in the post-Soviet republics. As the possibility of memberships for Ukraine and Georgia was an important aspect of the debate, this issue is treated separately. Next, is the aspect of the debate concerned with NATO's presence in the rest of Russia's "near abroad", mainly concerning the countries in Central Asia. As these issues also are linked to the aspect of the debate concerned with the CFE treaty and the ABM system in Eastern-Europe, this too will be assessed. The overview of the debate, seen in the previous part of this chapter, illustrated that all of the three papers shifted their focus from late 2008 and especially during 2009 and 2010. This period displays interesting perspectives on NATO and the Russia-NATO relationship, which is in contrast with the views presented previously, and therefore, this period will be discussed separately.

4.4 The Baltic countries

By examining the articles that followed the 2004-enlargement of NATO, contours of patterns in arguments concerning NATO's growing influence in the post-Soviet area can be detected. In the articles from *Rossiskaya Gazeta*, the inclusion of the Baltic countries into the alliance, as can be expected, was not welcomed. The perspective on how including the new countries would not increase stabilization in the Europe-Atlantic zone was obvious. In terms of fighting terrorism, for example, the official view was highlighted by quoting Putin's advisor at the time, Sergei Yastrzhembsky, who said that "we can understand the presence of NATO in Bulgaria or Romania in terms of the battle against terror. But there exists no such reason for presence in the Baltic" (rg.ru 2004.03.30). Furthermore, another negative aspect of the enlargement that could be seen in RG's articles, was the perspective on how the inclusion of

the new members from the Baltic would lead to a spread of an anti-Russian ideology inside the alliance (rg.ru 2004.03.30).

The perspective of NATO having anti-Russian features, and the image of the alliance as hostile towards Russia, may further be seen from articles treating the 2004 enlargement. As an example, one article highlighted this underlying tension in the Russia-NATO relationship by asking: “What is NATO to Russia today – a partner in the battle against common threats (meaning international terrorism) or an aggressive bloc which strives to surround us from all sides with military bases?” (rg.ru 2004.04.15).

When analyzing these negative perspectives on the alliance and the perspectives on how NATO was imposing a threat to Russia by enlarging, it might be worth noting how Trenin (2007: 35) explains how the policymakers in Russia perceive countries or alliances with “substantial military potential” as a possible threat to the country. This displays a general perspective on foreign policy, which plays into the image of NATO as threatening to Russia.

The enlargement of the alliance was also described as a process of a negative shift in balance of power (rg.ru 2004.04.15 and rg.ru 2004.04.01). The instability was seen as a result of how the Baltic countries had not signed the CFE treaty when entering the alliance. The focus on how the enlargement caused a negative shift in balance of power can be seen in relations to the political culture in the country influenced by zero-sum thinking. Petr Kratochvíl (2008: 407) sees this mind set as one of six norms that shapes Russia’s foreign policy.²³ In political theory, a zero-sum game can be applied at different possible situations, but in terms of Russia’s foreign policy, it refers to the idea that one actor’s gain will cause the other actor to lose (Østerud 2007: 40). Thus, the enlargement was perceived as NATO’s gain, which necessarily meant causing a negative shift in balance for Russia.

However, despite the overall negative attitude to the enlargement of NATO, the paper also had articles concerned with stating that even though the inclusion of the Baltic countries by no means increased stability in Europe, the most pressing danger to Russia’s security at the time was not the enlargement of NATO. An example is a quote by Victor Ozerov, the head of the Committee on Defense and Security in the Federation Council. When asked about the dangers of “enlargement of NATO eastward, the spread of weapons of mass destruction and terrorism” he answered that the main threat to Russian security at the time

²³ Kratochvíl mentions the modern national state, balance of power (zero-sum game), reliance on military force, Russia as a great power, Russia as different from the West and the image of Russia treated differently as the six main norms which has influenced Russia foreign policy. To read more, see Petr Kratochvíl’s article “The Discursive Resistance to EU-Enticement: The Russian Elite and the (Lack of) Europeanisation”

was indeed terrorism, and not NATO's enlargement (rg.ru 2004.09.10). This put the event of 2004 in perspective, and focused on looking ahead in the Russia-NATO relationship towards what united and not what separated them. In addition, president Putin's diplomatic skills were highlighted. Since Russia was in no position to prevent the enlargement in 2004, focus seemed to be on what Putin actually could do instead of what he could not do, at the time.

Looking at the issue of the Baltic countries in *Nezavisimaya Gazeta*, it was to a larger degree than RG concerned with treating the Russia-NATO relationship from different angles. As mentioned earlier, this has been done by including a wide range of Russian as well as foreign experts on the subject, in addition to the contribution of the papers' journalists. This is how NG was able to highlight different aspects of the enlargement. For example, it offered articles that were critical to the very existence of NATO, with phrases such as: "It should be reborn or die" in an article written by the professor Aleksei D. Bugatorov (ng.ru 2004.06.28). In a different article the relationship was described as deteriorating, as can be seen by quoting Vladimir Mukhin, a journalist frequently writing about NATO in the paper, "it seems that the contrasts between Russia and NATO increase by the day" (ng.ru 2004.03.26). Further, in an article written by two of the paper's journalists under the headline "The fuzzy Russia-NATO partnership", difficulties in the relations were discussed, and the article pointed to the lack of the ratification of the CFE treaty by the Baltic countries as one of the main obstacles (ng.ru 2004.04.09).

Despite these negative perspectives, positive views were given room too. When assessing the articles written by foreign experts in NG, it became obvious that most of these presented positive perspectives on the Russia-NATO relationship. It is not to say that the only positive perspectives on the alliance were from foreigners, but their contributions were often emphasizing Russia's possibilities that would result from NATO cooperation. One example of positive views on the future of Russia and NATO, can be seen in an article written by three foreign experts, Steven Miller from Harvard University, George Le Gelt from Institute of International and Strategic Studies in Paris and Gwyn Prins from London School of Economics. Their perspectives on the Russia-NATO relationship were presented in an article which stated that "the chance for Russia to integrate within the European security system has increased significantly" (ng.ru 2004.04.02). This was written at the same time as the official view in RG focused on how NATO's enlargement was causing tension and instability, and their views may be seen as an attempt to balance out the negative perspectives at the time.

Further, an interesting aspect of the debate in NG was the evaluation on the enlargement by the paper's journalist Mukhin. He criticized the Russian government for taking action too late in diplomatic terms "as in every aspect of Russian foreign policy" (ng.ru 2004.04.05). However, what he seemed most disappointed about was how the Russian government acted too late in terms of hindering American and NATO activity in the post-Soviet areas. This illustrates how critique of the Russian government's handling of NATO issues goes hand in hand with perspectives on the importance of the "near abroad" in Russia.

Further, in Novaya, the 2004-enlargement was treated in several articles, and two aspects of the debate may be said to be of special interest. First, is how the Russian government's focus on how NATO's enlargement posed a threat to Russia, was seen as exaggerated. One article, for example, went far in implying that the threat the enlargement posed was used to benefit those who worked within the system of protecting Russia from external dangers. The headline of this particular article was "The Battle with NATO – a Russian national game" meaning that the fear of NATO was not as real as the official Russian stand wanted it to seem (novayagazeta.ru 2004.04.05). The same article further pointed at how the battle between Russia and NATO had become a habitual game, which was played for fun and for economic reasons, rather than due to real fear of the alliance. The article even stated that "exaggeration of the "NATO-threat" concretely helps many important state officials live in luxury despite rather low official wages" (novayagazeta.ru 2004.04.05). Hence, the newspaper offered critique to the Russian system, rather than to NATO's decision to expand eastward.

Second, in Novaya, questions concerning the Russian government's hang to act a certain way one day, and then differently another day were asked in relations to the enlargement. One example is an article that asked why suddenly the common maxima after the enlargement was "enemies at the gate" when "only yesterday we called each other partners in the "name of peace"" (novayagazeta.ru 2004.04.22). This aspect of the debate concerning Russia's dual policy towards NATO may be seen in relations to its contradictory foreign policy on a general level. Fritz W. Ermarth is (2006: 7) describes the contradictory characteristics of Russian foreign policy as "defensiveness bordering to paranoia, on one hand, combined with assertiveness bordering on pugnacity, on the other".²⁴ The image of Russian foreign policy in terms of its dealings with NATO, where harsh rhetoric was

²⁴ Fritz W. Ermarth's article on Russian strategic culture may be read for more information on the subject, "Russia's strategic culture: past, present, and ... in transition" (2006).

combined with statements on the wish to cooperate, also reflects the notions made in chapter three on Russia's disposition for untimely diplomacy.

The 2004-enlargement was indeed seen as a tough blow for the Russian government, and was treated with interest in all of the three papers. However, as will be demonstrated in the following, the historical bonds which ties Russia together with Ukraine and Georgia, seemed to cause more worries in terms of their wish to integrate closer with NATO, than that of the Baltic countries.

4.5 Ukraine and Georgia

The NATO debate in the three papers to a large extent concerns the process of previous republics of the Soviet Union developing bonds with the West through the alliance. Therefore, the aspect of Ukrainian and Georgian memberships was an important part of the debate from 2004 until 2008. In terms of overall trends on this side of the debate, RG was preoccupied with whether and when Ukraine and Georgia would enter NATO. In terms of comment and analysis, as will be illustrated later, there seemed to be only two reasons why these countries would be interesting to NATO, and that was the alliance's need to legitimize itself, and the need for resources for its mission in Afghanistan. When it comes to the overall trend in NG, the paper had numerous articles on this subject, which showed a variety of opinions. One of the clearest and most prominent perspective in NG, was the image of Russia pushing Ukraine and Georgia into the open arms of NATO, for example by giving Ukraine a triumph card with the gas dispute in 2006. In Novaya there were also several articles written on the subject, but the articles displayed skepticism to the whole debate about Georgian and Ukrainian memberships. They claimed that this was a constructed problem, pointing at how there was actually little chance that these two countries would be a part of the alliance at the time.

In the following, the aspect of the NATO debate linked to Georgia and Ukraine will be divided to two, due to the amount of articles written on this subject. First, the debate in the initial years, from 2004 until 2006, will be treated. This was a rather calm period. However, during 2006 it began to show signs of the tension that was affecting the Russia-NATO relationship at the time. The next period, from 2007-2008 saw a development where the debate about possible Ukrainian and Georgian memberships reflected the overall level of increasing tensions in Russia-NATO relations. Together, perspectives on from the two periods illustrate the importance of these areas to Russia.

4.5.1 The initial years (2004-2006)

In RG the development of Georgia and Ukraine building tighter bonds with NATO was not given major relevance in the initial years. For example, in 2005, Georgia's wish to move closer to NATO was given some attention in one article, under the headline "Tbilisi hastens towards NATO" (rg.ru 2005.04.15). However, it only referred to a few statements made by the spokesman of the Georgian parliament, Nino Burjanadze. According to the article, she stated that the country would continue the process of integration with NATO, but this was left uncommented. In a different article later that year, however, the resistance to NATO's plans of working closer with Ukraine towards a possible membership was given some attention, as it pointed at the fact that Brussels was well aware that Moscow did "not agree" with this development (rg.ru 2006.06.06). The overall negative view on the two countries' wish to move closer to the West can be noticed, but it was stated in a rather mild tone.

The gas dispute in 2006 was in RG not a major topic within the NATO debate, though it was treated. For example, one article looked at the statements made at NATO's Riga summit, where energy security was on the agenda. The republican chairman from the American Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, Richard Lugar, made a rather harsh statement on how Russia in 2006 was using energy as a weapon "for reaching political aims" (rg.ru 2006.11.29). His statement was commented by Sergei Karaganov, who replied that NATO's new focus on energy security had to be seen in the light of NATO being an alliance which was striving to justify its own existence at the time (rg.ru 2006.11.29). Thus, protecting Ukraine from Russia was seen as the alliance new mission.

In NG, several articles were written on the development that took place in Georgia and Ukraine in the initial years. Articles with headlines such as "Russians are leaving, NATO is entering" (ng.ru 2005.09.12) and "Orange directions" (ng.ru 2005.10.20) illustrate the image of NATO as taking over in areas where the main influence previously had been Russian, as well as the democratic movements in the two countries that caused their leaders to look elsewhere than towards Russia.

However, although referred to in 2004-2005, the debate about possible Ukrainian and Georgian memberships peaked during 2006. And the gas dispute between Russia and Ukraine sparked it off. Two aspects of this side of the NATO debate are worth highlighting. The first is the perspective of Russian diplomacy failing in terms of its relationship with Ukraine. Under the headline "Moscow pushed Ukraine towards NATO" one of the paper's journalists wrote that security in the energy sector had become increasingly important to

NATO at the time, and that the decision to cut off gas supplies to Ukraine did little more than to hand the Ukrainian leaders a triumph card in the process of entering the alliance (ng.ru 2006.01.12). Further, Moscow was perceived as not having fully grasped the fact that Ukraine had chosen a “European perspective” and that the Russian “gas war” in fact “increased additional possibilities for Ukraine to enter NATO” (ng.ru 2006.01.12). Thus, NG again offered critique to the way Russian government was handling its relationship with previous members of the Soviet Union, pointing at how Russian leaders actually could blame themselves for this outcome.

A second aspect of this side of the NATO debate worth treating, is how one article from NG analyzed Ukraine’s relationship to NATO in the light of Russia’s relationship with the alliance. Again, the paper’s journalist Mukhin contributed to the NATO debate as he wrote that both countries just as actively sought partnerships with the alliance, and that while “the Russian government on one side condemns the active contact between Kiev and NATO it, on the other side, pursues similar if not a greater amount of activities itself” (ng.ru 2006.06.09). Hence, the image of Russia having right to a special role in NATO relations was criticized.

Furthermore, as previously emphasized, NG is a paper that has published a range of perspectives on issues in the NATO debate. It published articles which projected both positive and negative images of NATO. One of the negative views reflects the image of NATO possessing anti-Russian features. This perspective can for example be seen in an article written by Konstantin Kosachev, the chairman of the Russian Duma’s Committee on International Affairs. Kosachev claimed that the “orange elites look at the alliance for protection against Russia” and that it was unfair that Russia’s negative position on Ukrainian membership had become synonymous with Russia being against democracy (ng.ru 2006.11.27). In this particular article, the perspective of how it was about time that the leaders of NATO started seeing that Russia-NATO relations was not about “bad Russia” being against “good NATO” was also emphasized (ng.ru 2006.11.27).

In NG there were several articles which countered the perspectives on how bad Russia-NATO relations were seen as the result of anti-Russian attitudes in NATO’s leadership. One example is an article written by Mikhail G. Delyagin, a Russian expert in economics. He treated the development of Ukrainian’s direction away from Russia from a different angle. In his article, Ukraine’s choice to move closer to NATO was presented as a result of it being the only possibility for closer integration with the West. Further, in the

article Delyagin pointed at to how, at the time, Russia struggled because in a modern world the number of “tanks and money” was not as important as “symbols of development”, of which he claimed Russia had none (ng.ru 2006.10.23). This made Russia less of an alternative than the West, which he stated was why countries such as Ukraine chose the Western model instead of the Russian. He ended his article by noting that when Russia had dealt with its own problems and become “a symbol, a model and a public example of modern and global development” then NATO’s enlargements would be just as urgent as “the enlargement of the Golden Hordes” (ng.ru 2006.10.23). By referring to the Mongol invasion of Russia 800 years ago, he makes a clear point about the importance of Russia’s path in the future in terms of its development. The question about Ukrainian membership in NATO was used to illustrate that the real question was not when it would happen, but why. And according to Delyagin it was because Russia at this time was not able to offer what Ukraine sought.

In addition to articles which discussed the motives behind the wish to apply for NATO memberships, there were also articles that discussed the actual chances for the two countries to become members of the alliance. It was indeed seen as rather unrealistic that either Ukraine or NATO would become members of the alliance in the nearest future (ng.ru 2006.09.11). Georgia’s path into a possible membership was described as long, and the negative stand from the Russian government on subject was described (ng.ru 2006.09.20).

In articles from Novaya the possibility of Ukrainian and Georgian memberships was not that frequently treated in the initial years. However, it did give some comments on the development of previous Soviet republics looking towards the West. The process of NATO’s enlargement was for example described as a “nightmare” which had come true to the Russian government (novayagazeta.ru 2005.04.25a). Furthermore, countries such as Armenia and Azerbaijan were expected to follow along the same path as the three countries in the Baltic. This aspect of the debate was further highlighted and Ukraine’s wish to enter NATO was used as an example to illustrate the development of previous loyal states turning away from Russia and towards the West (novayagazeta.ru 2006.06.01). One perspective that can be seen in the NATO debate in Novaya that is not present in the other papers, was how several articles were preoccupied with the only alternative Russia would have left if its neighbors continued to turn its back to it, namely Belarus. This perspective was emphasized repeatedly in the paper, and as one article pointed out, there was indeed a fear that the development would lead to “isolation in the north-eastern corner of Europe” where the Russian and Belorussian governments would build a “stronghold against any orange revolution” (novayagazeta.ru

2005.04.25a). Thus, the articles from Novaya show awareness over the development of how previous allies from the time of the Soviet Union decided to turn towards the West. However, instead of criticizing the Russian government for its lack of ability to keep on to its influence in these areas, it criticizes the direction it fears Russia will take, and that is the direction of isolation together with Belarus.

4.5.2 Rising tensions (2007-2008)

Tensions between Russia and the West were rising steadily towards the summer of 2008. The aspect of the NATO debate concerning Ukraine and Georgia in RG reflected this development. Moreover, articles from this period displayed perspectives on the alliance that is worth assessing closer. One perspective that became clear in the debate about NATO's enlargement into the areas of previous Soviet republics was the image of US leading the alliance on this expanding mission, which can be exemplified by a quote from one article that pointed at how "the White House has always supported the idea of enlargement NATO" (rg.ru 2007.03.28).

Furthermore, as mentioned, from reading articles in RG, one could see how there was an image of Ukraine as important to NATO due to the alliance's new energy security mission in Europe. However, the perspective in 2008 had changed somewhat, and now Ukraine was seen as interesting by the alliance as a result of its need of resources for its mission in Afghanistan. One example of this attitude can be seen by looking at an article by Yevgeni Koshokin, the director of the Russian Institute for Strategic Studies. He pointed at how NATO was struggling in Afghanistan at the time and that Ukrainian talk about wanting to support NATO in terms of antiterrorist operations meant "that Ukrainian troops will be sent to Afghanistan" (rg.ru 2008.01.17). Karaganov, furthermore, described the Ukrainian leaders' initiative to integrate with NATO as "playing with fire" and pointed at the nature of the alliance as one that leads military-political confrontations. Thus, the Ukrainian people would suffer the faith as "cannon fodder" if they were to become members (rg.ru 2008.03.26). These are rather harsh words and illustrate the feelings that were provoked when Ukraine, a previous partner, decided make a change in its priorities looking towards the West.

The importance of the Bucharest summit in April 2008 and the numbers of articles concerned with this aspect of the debate was highlighted in the overview of the debate's main issues. This was, as described earlier, when the decision on memberships for

Georgia and Ukraine was made. The negative answers to the requests was by Russian delegation at the summit seen as “winning a battle” but not the “war” (rg.ru 2008.04.05). The “battle” was Ukrainian and Georgian memberships, which NATO would reassess later in December the same year, while the “war” reflects the perspective on NATO as a continuing expanding alliance.

The importance of the possibility of Ukrainian and Georgian NATO memberships can also be highlighted by referring to an article written just before the decision on memberships was made in April. It pointed at how “much is depending on the answer to this question. Not only on Russia’s relationship with the organization in the future, but also Russia’s relationship with the US and the European Union” (rg.ru 2008.04.02). Furthermore, there is one article in particular, on the topic of possible memberships for Ukraine and Georgia, which may say to break with the image of RG as a newspaper that offers little if any critical analysis of the foreign policy in terms of its relationship with NATO. The article is based on interview RG made with a representative for the European Parliament, Marek Siwiec. The first question asked was linked to the possible memberships of Ukraine and Georgia, and the consequences it might have on the Russia-European relationship. One of the points made by Siwiec answering this question was how Russia’s relationship with the alliance seemed as though built upon a policy characterized as having “split personalities” (rg.ru 2008.04.15). The aspect of Russian foreign policy as contradictory have been pointed out at several occasions in both NG and Novaya, but this one of the very few places such remarks was observed in RG. This is not a comment made on Russian foreign policy by a journalist in RG, but still it was rather striking that the Siwiec’s statement was published in the paper and it broke with a pattern in RG where Kremlin’s policy was either not commented, or commented in positive terms.

By looking at how the war with Georgia was treated as a part of the NATO debate in RG, some remarks on official perspectives on the alliance can be made. As stated in the overview of the debate, the war in Georgia was not treated as a part of the NATO debate to a large extent. However, one interesting aspect may be seen from how Dmitri Medvedev was described as not seeing anything frightening about NATO deciding to break off contact with Russia as a result of the war. Also, in the eyes of the Russian government, it was NATO that after the break had to decide what to do next in terms of further cooperation with Russia (rg.ru 2008.08.26).

The attitudes on the suspension of formal contact through the NRC, which was the consequence of Russia's conflict with Georgia in relations to NATO, may be seen in terms of Russia's political culture. According to Ermarth (2006: 6), in terms of solving conflicts in Russia, this is influenced by a hang to do so by using methods such as force, picking fights and plotting, while methods such as voting and negotiation is less used in Russian foreign policy. This might also be seen in relations to Neumann and Pouloit's notions on Russia's untimely diplomacy. Thus, a situation as the one that occurred after the war with Georgia was maybe not perceived as being as dramatic in Kremlin as it was in Brussels.

Towards the end of the year, the atmosphere seemed changed. For example, Karaganov highlighted that "bad peace is always better than confrontations" in an article under the headline "Do we need NATO?" (rg.ru 2008.12.10). This might be said to represent an approach which in NG and Novaya was presented much clearer, namely that isolation during the fall of 2008 did not provide Russia with more than what a partnership did.

In NG the debate about Georgia and Ukraine displayed some of the same perspectives on the US's role in NATO considering its interest for including Ukraine and Georgia into the alliance. For example under the telling headline: "Multispeed integration, the US will pay for Georgian and Ukrainian tickets into NATO" (ng.ru 2007.03.28). This article held a clear resemblance to the article in RG, which stated that the US always had been in favor of eastward enlargement of the alliance. Hence, there seems to be coinciding attitudes on the US role as initiating the process of making Ukraine and Georgian NATO-members.

In contrast to RG, however, NG was not as preoccupied with the possibility of NATO memberships for Georgia and Ukraine, possibly due to a more realistic approach to the issue. However, several articles did display a rising level of tensions between Russia and NATO at the time. In order to illustrate the perspectives on the level of tension, an article from the end of 2007 can be used. This article, just as the one above from RG, looked at Russia-US relations as closely linked to Russia-NATO relations. It looked at different challenges, which made the Russia-NATO relationship a strained one. However, it was not the article itself that described these problems; it was a picture of Sergei Lavrov and Condoleezza Rice and the text underneath this picture. Their rather solemn expressions coincided with the impression from the article, and underneath, Lavrov and Rice was described as "not tuned in on the same frequency" (ng.ru 2007.12.10). This indeed fit the overall Russia-US relationship, but also the Russia- NATO relationship at the time. A solution to the problems was not expected to be found any time soon, and the perspective on

how the distance between the alliance and Russia at the end of the year was perceived to be significant, could be seen.

The war with Georgia in 2008 was to a certain degree treated as a part of the NATO debate in NG. As tensions were rising in the Russia-NATO relationship towards the middle of 2008, there were articles that stated that the war with Georgia was indeed a very serious event in the Russia-NATO relationship. In an article from August 2008, the war was described as “the second most serious event in the relationship between the Russian Federation and NATO since the end of the Cold War” (ng.ru 2008.08.18). The other event here referred to is the NATO bombing of Beograd during the Kosovo war in 1999, which was when Russia broke all contact with NATO through the PJC.

Furthermore, the summer of 2008 is in a different article referred to as “the Cold Summer” giving immediate associations to the Cold War (ng.ru 2008.08.29). However, the article’s focus was not on what separated Russia and NATO at this point in time, when tension really had build up between Russia and the alliance for years. There were actually several articles in 2008 that focused on the positive aspects of further cooperation with NATO, due to their common threats. For example, in one of the articles where this was the subject, the situation as was described as how “today there exists common and dangerous enemies for Moscow, Washington and Brussels” and that “without a doubt they will exist also tomorrow, and the day after tomorrow”, pointing out a common platform of interests (ng.ru 2008.08.29). These positive and hopeful aspects on Russia-NATO relations at this moment can be seen as attempts to emphasize that despite disagreements on smaller matters, the countries of NATO and Russia still faced many of the same threats, which made cooperation valuable.

This focus illustrates the period that followed. At the end of the year, an editorial pointed at how even though there were many differences between Russia and the alliance at the time, they still stood “before a number of common threats”, and that if the leaders on Moscow, Brussels and Washington were able to see past their own political ambitions, then maybe Medvedev was right when asked about the possibility of Russia membership in NATO had answered: “never say never” (ng.ru 2008.11.21).

Thus, towards the end of the year, the image of cooperation with NATO was seen as better than isolation. This was also seen in articles from Novaya where the possibility of isolation for Russia was treated as an important aspect of the NATO debate. Moreover, perspectives presented in articles from Novaya on the possibility of Ukrainian and Georgian

memberships in NATO can be worth assessing closer as they displayed some important views on the alliance. One such perspective is how the speculations on whether Georgia would enter either NATO or the EU at that time were seen as unrealistic. Georgian hopes and the Russian fears of NATO membership were seen as created by the leaders of each country and used as a political tool against each other. Furthermore, on NATO's decision not to accept the Georgian and Ukrainian requests in April 2008, what was described as "Putin's diplomatic victory" was criticized, due to how it was never really expected that they would get a positive answer in the first place. However, there were also perspectives on this process that described the possibility for memberships of the countries as premature, but even though at this time it was too early, if the development continued, their path would lead to memberships in the end (novayagazeta.ru 2008.04.07). Furthermore, despite the perspective of how a membership in EU or NATO was perceived as unrealistic, one article pointed at the importance of the "strategic choice" Georgia had taken (novayagazeta.ru 2007.03.01). A choice, which would not give immediate NATO membership but one that soon, would make it a part of the West.

Furthermore, as in previous years, the Russia-Belarus relationship was also at this time looked upon with skepticism. The country was seen as the only partner Russia would have left, if the assertive Russian foreign policy continued to make previous allies turn to the West (novayagazeta.ru 2007.12.17).

Another perspective worth treating on the alliance from articles in Novaya may be found from the time of the Bucharest summit in April 2008. As seen in RG, the development of previous Soviet republics looking towards NATO was perceived as a negative trend. In NG, both positive and negative perspectives have been visible. However, in NG to a certain degree, there were opinions that reflected the official stand in terms of the importance of the "near abroad". These also criticized how the Russian government had not been able to secure Russian interests in these areas.

In contrast to both RG and NG, articles from Novaya described this trend as a possibility for Russia. For example, the development that was taking place in these countries was described as an example to be followed. For example, one article pointed out that it was about time the Russian government looked "at our neighbors' structure of integration with the West as a bridge towards a liberal civilization that should help Russia towards taking the same course" (novayagazeta.ru 2008.08.06). The Ukrainian and Georgian integration with NATO was also described as a tool to measure the approach to liberal democracy in Russia. This meant that those who opposed the development of integration also opposed the wish for

democratic values. Furthermore, as a rather strong appeal only months before the break in relations between Russia and NATO on article saw “integration with the West” as “the only way out of the “deadlock” in which Russia is stuck” (novayagazeta.ru 2008.08.06).

Moreover, articles from Novaya displayed fear of Russian isolation as a result of the conflict with Georgia. This may be seen as a reaction to the hopes of closer integration with the West displayed only months before. The possibility and fear of isolation was described in several articles, and one saw the situation after the war with Georgia as similar to the “ring of hostile isolation” which followed after the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in 1979 (novayagazeta.ru 2008.08.25 and 2008.08.21).

Further, on the issue of the war and on the consequences it had for Russia’s relationship with NATO, president Medvedev’s statement seen in RG on how the suspension of formal contact was not perceived as dramatic in Moscow, was criticized. One article also asked a rhetoric question on whether the ruling elite in Russia had forgotten what happened “last time our country came out of a cold war?” pointing to how it had caused the USSR to break into pieces, hinting that maybe this time around, a new approach ought to be preferred (novayagazeta.ru 2008.09.01).

Perhaps one of the most important examples of how articles from Novaya represented voices of opposition, was the perspective on the underlying motives for Russia to use military power in the conflict with Georgia. Georgia’s regional conflicts were one of the main reasons for it not being considered ready for deeper integration with the NATO, and as the article pointed out, by reaching a level of armed conflict in the areas of South-Ossetia and Abkhazia there was no doubt that Georgia’s case in terms of regional disturbances would be extensively worsened (novayagazeta.ru 2008.08.10). Hence, the paper gives an analysis of the war which would be unimaginable in RG. Like in the two other papers, the focus in 2009 and 2010 seemed to be changing also in Novaya. Articles that looked back, evaluated and looked forward seem to mark a new beginning in Russia-NATO relations.

After having treated the subject of possible memberships for Ukraine and Georgia into the alliance, it might be worth noting that there was indeed a third round of NATO enlargement in 2009, where Croatia and Albania were admitted. This was treated in the NATO debate in the Russian papers, but compared to the debate on the possibility of memberships for the two previous members of the Soviet Union, it is clear that the battle for influence in Russia’s “near abroad” has a special status in the debate.

Before taking a closer look at the changes that occurred after the break between Russia and NATO in 2008, the importance of Central Asia and the Caucasus will be discussed in order to highlight several important aspects of the NATO debate in Russia, both in terms of influence in post-Soviet areas, but also the perceived image of Russia as a nation of initiative in world politics.

4.6 Central Asia and Caucasus

The debate about NATO in the three chosen newspapers, have to a varying degree focused on the previous Soviet republics in Central Asia and Caucasus. For RG, the trend was that the CIS countries were mentioned in relations to cooperation through the CSTO, where the Russian initiative for cooperation between the two, was emphasized. In NG and Novaya the articles about these countries in relations to NATO was linked to the debate about how Russia's previous allies were turning towards the West and a deeper integration with NATO.

Two important perspectives on NATO and Russia's relationship with the alliance were reflected in the debate about the countries of Central Asia in RG's articles. First is the image of Putin as a man of initiative and the importance of Russian diplomacy in international relations. One example of how RG was concerned with presenting the Russian leadership as one of inventiveness and strength, can be seen by using an article that demonstrated the diplomatic skills of Putin as an example. Under the headline "Putin prepared a plan for NATO" it described how Putin, after a meeting with the CSTO, presented NATO's secretary general Jaap de Hoop Scheffer with a plan for cooperation with NATO in the battle against drug trafficking (rg.ru 2005.06.25).

However, as the Russian initiatives were not met with the same enthusiasm with which they were presented, articles seemed preoccupied with the lack of response to the Russian initiative. This issue was for example approached in an interview with the NATO representative John Forne, who was present at a conference on Russia-NATO relations in St. Petersburg. One of the main questions asked was why NATO would not cooperate with the CSTO (rg.ru 2006.02.21). Further, Russia's importance as a partner to NATO through the CSTO was linked to NATO's mission in Afghanistan. The aspect of how Russia could offer assistance for its mission in Afghanistan through the operations Russia was doing with the CSTO in the region at the time was highlighted (rg.ru 2007.02.10). This displayed an image in the paper of Russia as an important partner at the international stage in terms of global security.

Second, another image of Russia's role in international relations can also be seen in relations to the CSTO. The perspective on Russia as an equal to NATO can be seen from the aspirations it had for NATO to deal with the CSTO as a whole, not through bilateral cooperation with its members. The CSTO, with Putin as a powerful initiator at the lead, hence reflects the image of Russia having a determining role in international politics.

NG published a large number of articles concerned with the aspect of the NATO debate linked to the countries in Central Asia. As described previously, this side of the debate mainly concerned the development of previous Soviet republics' shifts in loyalty from Russia to the West. Furthermore, as on most issues, the paper has published articles that saw this development as devastating, as well as offering new possibilities to Russia.

One example of negative perspectives on NATO's presence in the region can be found in an article written by Aleksei D. Bogatyrov who introduced the term "asiatization" [*aziatizatsiya*]. It was used to reflect the growing influence of NATO in the areas, which he strongly opposed (ng.ru 2004.06.28). A second example can be found in an interview from 2005, with Semen A. Bagdasarov, an expert on Central Asia. A journalist from NG wanted to know why the republics of the former USSR were "with such joy running into the arms of the European Union and NATO?" (ng.ru 2005.03.18). The expert blamed this development on Western colonialism and emphasized the special role inhabited by Russia in these areas. Furthermore, in addition to displaying negative perspectives on the growing interest of NATO in the region, Bagdasarov's statements may also be said to present a perspective based on "messianism" in Russian foreign policy culture. This term reflects the idea about how Russia has a mission "beyond security and prosperity for the country" (Ermarth 2006: 6). The different Russian epochs have had different such missions, and the idea of Moscow as the third Rome and Soviet as the initiator of a worldwide socialist revolution, are two examples. In the interview, Bagdasarov displayed his beliefs in how Russia, as a country existing between the West and the East, should take on the role as a mediator or a "bridge" between the Islamic republics of Central-Asia and the West (ng.ru 2005.03.18).

Furthermore, there were also examples of positive perspectives on NATO's role in Central Asia. One example is the article by Vadim Solovyev, the editor of NG's supplementary issue "Independent Military Review". According to him, the presence of NATO and the US in Central Asia was in fact not a liability to Russia, but could be seen as an advantage. Since the threats and challenges in the region hardly could be fought and

overcome by Russia alone, cooperation in these areas should have been perceived as beneficial, not threatening (ng.ru 2004.08.18).

The perspective on the case of NATO's increased attention on the areas of the previous Soviet republics in Caucasus and Central Asia confirm the impression of the importance of Russia's "near abroad". In addition, it may be worth noting how the journalist Mukhin from NG criticizes the Russian government's lack of ability to secure Russian interests in these areas. For example, in the article "Russia and NATO: confrontations are only beginning" Mukhin wrote that "the CIS countries prefer the West" and that one should not just pay attention to the growth in military presence of the alliance in the region at the time, but also on how the relationships between Russia and the CIS countries had changed (ng.ru 2004.04.05). In terms of critique of this development, he further stated that "the diplomacy of Moscow is either not able to realize what danger foreign military presence in Central Asia imposes, or it, as it is called, puts up a good face whilst playing a bad game" (ng.ru 2005.10.24).

Moreover, as the tensions increased between Russia and NATO towards 2008, several perspectives worth assessing on the alliance from articles concerning the battle for influence in the region, may be noted. First, is the image of NATO as an untrustworthy alliance as a result of the alleged promise given from NATO not to enlarge eastwards. This can for example be seen in an article from the end of 2006, which stated that during the period of Sergei Ivanov, at the time he was Deputy Prime Minister, confrontations reminding of those of the Cold War was revived. This was a result of how the alleged promise given by NATO was broken. The article pointed at how in 2006 several of the previous members of the Warsaw Pact had entered NATO, and that this clearly showed how the alliance was not to be trusted (ng.ru 2006.12.04).

Further, in an article that described the possibility of placing French airplanes, meaning NATO airplanes from a Russian perspective, together with Russian airplanes on the same military base in Tajikistan, was seen as synonymous with "giving up its geopolitical leadership in the region" (ng.ru 2007.09.12). Also, the process of Armenian integration with the West and possible development of tighter bonds with NATO was described as though Russia was "losing its main, if not its only partner in Caucasus" (ng.ru 2007.02.02). This may be said both to illustrate the perceived importance of these areas to Russia, as well as the image of NATO as a threat and a competitor in the region.

As the level of tension increased up to 2008 with the war in Georgia, the battle for influence in Central Asia became less of a focus in the NATO debate. In the aftermath of the war, the region was first and foremost mentioned in terms of possible cooperation through the CSTO and the challenges linked to a new path in the Russia-NATO relationship.

There are not as many articles on this subject in Novaya as in NG. However, they also treated the NATO debate linked to the development of change in the loyalty of previous allies from the Soviet Union. For example, as can be seen from one article where the development in Kazakhstan was treated and the question of how long it would continue to be one of Russia's most trustworthy partners, was asked (novayagazeta.ru 2006.06.01). The aspect of great power aspirations in Russia-NATO relations can for example be seen in an article where the perspectives of two experts are given on the subject, one of them a professor in History, Dmitri Furman. He viewed Russia's attempt to remain in control of the previous Soviet states through the CIS as "the third and last form of organization of the Russian empire" where Russia tried to hold on to the "illusion of tranquility" (novayagazeta.ru 2007.02.12). Thus, the article contributed to the debate by analyzing Russia's interests in the region as one based on its great power aspirations. Furman further pointed out that understanding the motives behind Russia's foreign policy would be as difficult as to understand any "personal motives", implying that decisions made in Russia on foreign policy were made by those seeking to enhance their personal positions. In addition, he offered a description of the emotions felt by the Russian leadership when the countries in of Central Asia, and other areas perceived as belonging to Russia's special sphere of influence, wanted to seek integration with others than Russia, such as EU and NATO. In his view this indeed caused both "pain and jealousy" to Moscow, emphasizing the importance of these regions to the Russian elite (novayagazeta.ru 2007.02.12).

After the war in Georgia, there seemed to be an understanding of how the process of previous Soviet republics seeking integration with the West through NATO would continue. As suggested in an article from Novaya, the future of the Russia-NATO relationship was dependent on how Russia would deal with its previous satellites' "flirting" with the alliance (novayagazeta.ru 2009.01.27).

Before looking at the process of NATO and Russia resuming contact after the war with Georgia, a short look at the debate about the CFE treaty and the ABM system can further illustrate Russian perspectives in the NATO debate.

4.7 The CFE treaty and the ABM system

When the Baltic States entered NATO in 2004, they did so without having ratified the CFE treaty, which, as pointed out previously, was seen by the Russian government as causing a negative shift in balance in terms of security.

In RG, the fact that several countries in Europe had not signed the treaty in 2004 was indeed described as jeopardizing the stability of the whole continent (rg.ru 2004.04.01). An interesting aspect of this debate is how the official view on Russia's fulfillment of the requirements of the revised treaty from Istanbul was stated in an article from 2006. In the interview with the NATO representative John Forne, as also referred to above, the journalist from RG asked why the members of NATO had not ratified the new CFE treaty. The NATO official answered that NATO believed that the treaty was perceived as a "cornerstone" in European security, but due to how Russia still had not fulfilled its commitments concerning the removal of Russian troops from Georgia and the Moldavian region of Transnistria, the official position in NATO was to wait. The Russian journalists replied that "Russia is convinced that it has fully followed the commitments of the Istanbul treaty", displaying a perspective of how Russia has a different approach to security and cooperation than NATO. As in the words of Forne: "on this question the Russian foreign minister and the ministers of Western countries disagree" (rg.ru 2006.02.21).

Further, the rising tensions in the Russia-NATO relations may also be reflected in the debate about the CFE treaty as Russia decided to put a moratorium on the treaty in 2007. This was the same year as the debate about an AMB system was included in the NATO debate in the paper. In combination, these two issues contributed to the sense of an increased level of tension in the debate. As an example, an article that described a Russia-NATO meeting can be used. Here, Scheffer's statement about how Russia and NATO needed each other, which was why dialogue between the two was so important, was commented on as it pointed to how "lately dialogue seems more like two monologues" (rg.ru 2007.06.26). According to the article, these two monologues played out in the opposing positions between Russia and NATO on "the ABM system in Europe, on enlargement on the alliance eastward, on Kosovo and the CFE treaty" (rg.ru 2007.06.26).

Furthermore, in addition to focus on the increased tension between Russia and NATO, the possibility of an AMB system in Europe was seen as causing a split within NATO, between Europe on one side and the US on the other (rg.ru 2007.03.14). This perspective is worth noting as Russia was presented with the powers to cause internal raptures

in the alliance. This approach can also be seen on the issue of the Russian government's decision to put a moratorium on the CFE treaty. Here, the fact that the countries within NATO could not agree on a common response to this act was discussed (rg.ru 2007.12.07). Further, the division between the "old" and the "new" Europe was pointed out through the disagreement on the prospects of Ukrainian and Georgian memberships, but also on the different opinions on the ABM system, which also was seen as splitting the organization (rg.ru 2008.04.02). This aspect, where Russia was able to cause disagreement and splits within NATO, may be seen as a way to present the alliance as weak, and to show how Russia could impose on its policy.

In NG the CFE treaty was also initially discussed in relations to the inclusion of the three Baltic countries in NATO. This was treated by looking at how the Russian government was showing concern over the fact that these three countries had not ratified the treaty and the possible consequences this could have, especially in terms of NATO patrolling the Baltic airspace (ng.ru 2004.04.09). As in RG, the problems and disagreement concerning the CFE treaty seemed to be of major interest in 2007, which is also when the issue of the ABM system was brought into the NATO debate. And just as in RG, the level of rising was detectable. But in contrast to RG, articles from NG seemed to counter the increased level of tension with suggestions on how the situation could be turned to the better for Russia. One example of this positive approach is an article written by Alexander Khranchikhin, an expert from the Institute of Political and Military Analysis. In his eyes, the planned ABM system in combination with plans of further enlargement of NATO, including Ukraine and Georgia, gave Russia a diplomatic advantage. This diplomatic lead could, according to him, be beneficial in terms of reaching a new agreement on the CFE treaty (NG.ru 2007.03.30). Hence, instead of withdrawing from the treaty, Khranchikhin suggested that there was a possibility for reaching an agreement by the use of diplomacy.

However, since this was not the method chosen in the end, and the moratorium on the CFE became a fact, several articles showed a continued support for agreement - not increasing level of tensions. This aspect of the debate can for example be seen in the article "Dangerous Moratorium" where NG's journalist wrote that "of course, better than to unilaterally withdraw from the treaty would be to come to an agreement on solutions in the field of disarmament" (ng.ru 2007.12.28). This statement reflects disappointment in terms of the failure of Russian diplomacy.

Furthermore, NATO and Russia's different approaches to security were discussed in terms of the disagreement over the CFE treaty. Russia's choice to withdraw from the CFE treaty and NATO's response to this action was seen as illustrating these differences. Moreover, Kremlin's foreign policy was described as a mix between sharp rhetoric and statements on its will to cooperate. This form of diplomacy was perceived as a style that not only would have consequences for the Bucharest summit, which were to take place shortly after, but also on the Russia-NATO relationship in the future (ng.ru 2008.02.14). This again touches upon the perspective on how the Russian diplomacy seen as something different from the Western.

Further, another interesting feature of the NATO debate in NG, linked to the CFE treaty, was the already mentioned aspect of fear of isolation, as seen in articles from Novaya. In an article written by Major General Vladimir Z. Dvorkin, a professor from the Russian Academy of Sciences (RAS), the image of the West as a threat was countered by pointing at how this image to a large degree was the result official propaganda (ng.ru 2008.04.24). He saw a need to discuss what actually imposed a threat to Russia at the time, as can be seen from the article's headline "Fictional or real threats". According to Dvorkin, what really threatened the country were confrontations and a following break in relations with the West. This, he further claimed, would leave Russia isolated and on the outside of the sphere of NATO and outside a security system, without the ability to contribute and influence to its development (ng.ru 2008.04.24). This display a fear of isolation as a result of Russia's foreign policy, as well as it criticizes the image of the West as a threat to Russia.

The same critique is found in the NATO debate in Novaya, where the official image of threats from the West was also described as propaganda, rather than posing any real danger. One article, written in July 2007 when the conflict on the CFE treaty was rising towards a peak, claimed that the statements given by Russian officials on how Russia followed the demands of the CFE treaty, whilst NATO broke them and "continued to increase its arsenal" were actually incorrect (novayagazeta.ru 2007.07.16). The article pointed out that Europe and the US in fact had built down their armies, and it used the example of how the number of American troops in Europe had decreased from 600 thousand in 1991 down to 60 thousand in 2007, arguing that the image of the alliance building up was a false one. It went far in implying that the choice to withdraw from the CFE treaty would not be beneficial to Russia. Indeed it stated that this would not just strengthen the other members "solidarity towards the US" it would also "significantly weaken Russia's security" (novayagazeta.ru

2007.07.16). Thus, the article may be said to have claimed that Russian diplomacy was only making the situation worse, again offering new angles that were in opposition to the official views in the NATO debate.

Furthermore, the high level of tension at the time was described as being the result of a number of separate events, which combined soured the relationship. One article saw the trouble with the CFE, the killing of Aleksander Litvinenko, disagreement over American bases in Europe and the dispute over the independence of Kosovo, as all being uncomfortable episodes, and made a point by stating that they were no more than that - by themselves. However, together they created “discontent and distrust” and that this pulled “the relationship to the West in to the realm of total conflict” (novayagazeta.ru 2007.07.30). The period that followed in 2009-2010 displayed a less tense approach to the Russia-NATO relationship, which will be illustrated next.

After having studied the debate about NATO from 2004 until 2008 in the three different newspapers, two remarks can be made. Firstly, the debate about NATO reflects the major events that had an apparent news value at the time and the increasingly tense environment in which Russia-NATO relations were developing in. Second, the debate has displayed several perspectives and images of the alliance and the nature of the Russia-NATO relationship.

In the following, the debate from the end of 2008 until the end of 2010 is assessed, as the focus of the debate changed, as illustrated in the overview. The papers still reported about happenings important to the Russia-NATO relationship, but the point of view seems to have altered, as it is the process of resuming contact and finding back together again that was of main importance. Moreover, this displays some new perspectives on NATO.

4.8 Russia and NATO reconnecting

Almost surprisingly early, already in late 2008, the Russian newspapers all have articles about the prospects of reconnecting with NATO after the break that followed the conflict with Georgia. From then on, and towards the Lisbon summit in November 2010, all three papers have numerous of articles treating the future of the Russia-NATO relationship.

Before studying the debate more closely, it may be worth noting some general trends during this period. In RG, the term “reset” [*perezagruzka*] and how a good relationship with Russia was important both for the US and for NATO at the time was treated frequently. A mild sense of optimism may be detected, especially around the time of the Lisbon summit

as the paper's articles referred to positive and hopeful statements made by both Russian and NATO officials. In NG, several articles displayed skepticism in terms of the Russia-NATO future to a larger degree than in RG, at least in 2009. However towards the end of 2010 some optimism and hope was noticed. The trend in Novaya seems to follow that in NG, with articles offering sober analysis of the Russia-NATO relationship. Thus, even though outright optimism and positive notes on NATO and the Russia-NATO relationship may not always be found explicitly in the papers' articles, it was evident that in the period between 2009 and 2010, there was less focus on the issues that previously had caused a sense of a high level of tension in the relationship.

Several perspectives worth assessing on the alliance and the Russia-NATO relationship may be found in the debate from late 2008 until the end of 2010 in RG. For example, at the end of the year in 2008, RG published an article that wrote a short comment on the decision made by NATO to resume contact with Moscow after cooperation had been suspended (rg.ru 2008.12.04). Remarks and comments were left out, but in an article written by Karaganov shortly after, a more personal tone was offered. According to him, some characteristics of the alliance were worth discussing as the contact with Russia would be resumed. Firstly, he pointed at how the development during the last decade had shown that NATO had returned to what Karaganov called "a classical aggressive alliance" due to the operations it had led outside the alliance's territory. Secondly, he claimed that in the last couple of years NATO had included countries whose leaders' wanted "revenge for their failures and defeats in the previous centuries" which resulted in them bringing their "anti-Russian" sentiments into the alliance. Thirdly, he wrote that despite claims from the alliance that it had changed, it largely remained the same organization that it had been during the Cold War. In addition, he also claimed that NATO had "revived the confidence of Europe, especially in its relations to Russia". The last point he made concerned the NRC, which according to Karaganov "in reality it isn't very beneficial" to Russia. Thus, in his article, Karaganov sums up perspectives on the alliance seen in the official NATO discourse in the articles from RG from 2004 and up until then. He drew an image of NATO as an alliance which was aggressive in nature, inhabiting anti-Russian features and working to increase Europe's strength so it could handle Russia with more confidence. However, despite a rather negative view on the alliance, Karaganov did in the same article, as referred to previously, conclude that a "cold peace is better than confrontation". He even stated that Russia could be a member of NATO, but then it would have to be a different NATO, suggesting that Russia

was willing to contribute to a security community, but on other terms than what the alliance was offering (rg.ru 2008.12.10).

Another aspect of the NATO debate in 2009-2010 was the focus on how bad relations with Russia did not benefit either the US, EU or NATO, which is why these resumed their bonds with Russia after the high level of tensions in 2008 (rg.ru 2009.02.12a). The signals from Washington were described by Konstantin Kosachev, the head of the Duma's Committee on International Relations. He pointed at how where these gestures "can only be welcomed – as they have been long awaited" (rg.ru 2009.02.12b). There was much focus on how the international community described the need for good Russia-relations, and the initiatives from America and NATO (rg.ru 2009.03.27).

In an interview with the permanent representative to NATO in Brussels, Dmitri Rogozin, the feeling of careful optimism may also be detected. On the question on what he believed about the prospects of Russia having a comprehensive dialogue with NATO in the future, Rogozin answered that "we are bound to be a more or less cautious, but still there is a positive development" (rg.ru 2009.05.27). Rogozin was also quoted after a meeting at ambassador level through the NRC in the spring of 2009. According to the article he was satisfied with how the meeting went and was happy that "NATO has abandoned its confrontational spirit" and decided to go through with the "reset" in its relations to Russia (rg.ru 2009.05.29). These statements might not seem to reflect a very positive image of Russia-NATO relations, but seen in contrast to the harsh comments Rogozin is known for, these are indeed very optimistic views. The statements, furthermore, display both perspectives on how NATO had been perceived as aggressive before the "reset", and the image of how the members of the alliance now had taken to their senses, and understood that resuming contact with Russia would serve their interests.

In addition to a positive perspective on the US "reset" initiated by the new American administration, the tone of careful optimism may also be found on the subject of NATO's new secretary general, Anders Fogh Rasmussen. Even though there was some insecurity concerning his position on several matters, for example in terms of the possibility of Ukrainian and Georgian memberships in the alliance, his focus on how the discrepancies between the alliance and Russia should not stand in the way for a their relationship, was highlighted (rg.ru 2009.08.04). His new leadership was further described in a positive tone in an article quoting Sergei Lavrov after a meeting through the NRC, which he claimed was a successful one thanks to Fogh Rasmussen. Lavrov even saw it as a meeting that "for the first

time in years lead to concrete results” (rg.ru 2009.12.07). Moreover, at the end of the year, when the new secretary general was to make his first visit in Moscow, the potential of the meeting was described as “an important step in the direction of restoring comprehensive cooperation” (rg.ru 2009.12.16).

Furthermore, focus on cooperation continued into 2010, but as noted in the overview of the development of the debate, the number of articles published in the federal edition of the paper declined during these last years. This tendency may reflect the softening in relations taking place, and the lack of news value this subject had in 2009/2010. However, during the time of the Lisbon summit in November 2010, the NATO issue seemed to get a new revival in RG. Articles underlined its importance as this was the first NRC meeting at the highest level since after the war with Georgia in 2008, and was interpreted as though it meant that US and NATO relations now was back on track. The challenges that remained in the Russia-NATO relationship were commented, but still, as can be seen in one article, Fogh Rasmussen’s statement on how focus ought to be on cooperation, was emphasized (rg.ru 2010.11.22).

In addition to articles that may be characterized as factual and as referring to the different statements and events, Karaganov again offered his opinions in an article in RG, about the NATO summit in Lisbon. Once more, his statement may be said to illustrate perspectives worth commenting. First and foremost, he wrote that he was indeed quite satisfied with the results of the summit, but not completely. He believed that the alliance’s focus on resuming contact with Russia had become a new way for NATO to justify its existence. Thus, he stated, the fact that Medvedev was present in Lisbon actually legitimized the alliance. This elevates Russia’s role at the international arena, as the security alliance supposedly lived only for having a normal relationship with its neighbor in the East. This was further perceived as a positive development for Russia, because having a close relationship with NATO might “strengthen our position in the world” - especially if the West’s position would weaken (rg.ru 2010.11.24). Karaganov pointed out how a close relationship with China too could strengthen Russia’s position, as this indeed was seen as the West’s main enemy. His statements reflect a perspective on how Russia could strengthen its role, preferably in combination with a weakened West and NATO. This is an image of world politics that fits well with the description of the principles of a zero-sum game.

As already mentioned, in NG, the debate about NATO after the war with Georgia took a somewhat different direction than the one described above in RG. Despite some

optimism about of resuming contact with NATO, the articles from NG focused more on the underlying differences between Russia and the alliance. However, some optimism may be detected, such as in the article “Isolation finally ended for Moscow”. Here, hope was displayed by suggesting that after the “most difficult phase in the Russia-NATO crisis has been overcome” the informal contact through the NRC would result in “mutual understanding” (ng.ru 2008.12.08).

However, the many obstacles that were blocking the path to comprehensive cooperation and greater integration were also discussed. As an example, one article treated what it saw as four major challenges in the relationship. The first was the lack of dialogue between the two parts, as a consequence of the break in formal meetings after the war in Georgia. The second issue was seen as the conflicting perspectives on the possibility of Ukraine and Georgia entering the alliance. The third were the problems linked to the lack of ratification of the new CFE treaty, and the fourth was the continued insecurity linked to the plans of an American ABM system in Europe (ng.ru 2009.01.23). Hence, a more moderate approach to the possibility of resuming full contact with NATO was observed here, than that found in RG. However, the article did conclude by quoting the Russian official statement where the will to constructive dialogue from Moscow’s side was emphasized (ng.ru 2009.01.23).

As in RG, NATO’s new secretary general was treated with interest also in NG. For example in an article under the headline “New secretary general – old problems” the expectations to Anders Fogh Rasmussen, were discussed (ng.ru 2009.08.07). A more cautious approach to what could be expected of the new leadership was noticeable here. For example on Fogh Rasmussens’s statement on the importance of Russia as a partner to NATO, one article commented how it was “peculiar that these words have been uttered also by Jaap De Hoop Scheffer, and by his predecessor lord George Robertson, and even before them by the secretary general Javier Solana (...) and yet a strategic partnership has still not been formed” (ng.ru 2009.08.07). This may be interpreted as disappointment, and an image of the alliance being unable to turn its statements into actions.

However, a more optimistic approach to the new secretary general could also be detected. Such as from an article that refereed to more positive notes from the Russian permanent representative to NATO, Rogozin. According to Rogozin here, the new secretary general was a man who, in contrast to Scheffer, was a real politician and not a bureaucrat and

having this man as NATO's leader was described as offering "new possibilities" to the Russia-NATO relationship (ng.ru 2009.09.18).

The debate about NATO in NG in 2010 continues along the same lines as in 2009, and towards the Lisbon summit in November. The process of restoring contact between the alliance and Russia, with all its obstacles and challenges, was discussed. But towards the end of the year, a slight change may be detected, as there seems to be a somewhat more optimistic tone in some of the articles. For example, the article "NATO too wants to have "reset" in its relationship with Russia" discussed the positive trend in Russia-NATO relations. One of these was Medvedev's invitation to the Lisbon summit (ng.ru 2010.09.23). Another example of positive perspectives on the Russia-NATO future can be found in an article that recognized the differences that existed between Russia and NATO at the time, but saw the development away from bipolar confrontations and towards the world as it was at the end of the millennium's first decade, as one which held possibilities for the Russian diplomacy. The article saw this new world order as Russia's chance not just to lead a "reactive" policy, but a policy that was built on initiative and one that "use the possibilities of the extended dialogue" to enhance the position of Russian diplomacy (ng.ru 2010.10.18).

However, as noted earlier, the paper's articles can offer both negative and positive comments on NATO. In an article from October 2010, the little information given on NATO's new strategic concept, which was to be launched at the summit in Lisbon, was commented. The journalist portrayed skepticism on how these plans were to be executed, and asked how the strategy could be completed when the countries of NATO were decreasing their military budgets at the time. He believed that NATO, with this new strategy, was trying to "reconcile the irreconcilable", or as he wrote in even harsher words, he saw the strategy an attempt to "cross a snake and a hedgehog" (ng.ru 2010.10.11).

Despite the skepticism, around the time of the Lisbon summit articles that had a more optimistic approach than earlier may be found. One example is the article "Lisbon success for Russia and NATO", which described the summit in relations to the Russia-NATO relationship as a positive one (ng.ru 2010.11.22). Furthermore, despite the aspect of problems concerning mutual trust, which the article described as still being present, it had an overall positive tone. In addition, the invitation for Medvedev to take part in the development of an ABM system was seen as one of the most important results of the summit (ng.ru 2010.11.22). This reflects how the feeling of playing an active role in the making of security policy in Europe appeals to the aspirations in Russia to be treated as an equal.

In Novaya, the debate about NATO in 2009-2010 may be said to be concerned with the process of reconnecting in terms of whether, at this time, Russia was ready for NATO and whether NATO was ready for Russia. This approach can be found in articles discussing the differences in mentality of NATO's members and Russia, in terms of security and how was built on a mutual distrust (novayagazeta.ru 2009.04.08).

Moreover, the underlying thought of zero-sum game in Russian foreign policy was highlighted through the relationship with NATO. This can be seen from the discussed differences in approaches to security. An example of this is from an article that assessed these differences by pointing at how NATO saw that a good relationship with Russia, despite the fact of major differences, was necessary in terms of global security. While Moscow, on the other side, had a different perspective, as the gains of NATO were perceived as Russia's loss (novayagazeta.ru 2009.05.06). This perspective on the Russia-NATO relationship highlights Moscow's aspirations for balance of power and touches upon the perspective on how cooperation always results in how one part must sacrifice for the other to succeed.

The foreign policy of Moscow is further commented in Novaya's articles. One example is an article that commented on Rasmussen's trip to Russia in 2009. Here the positive words of the new secretary general on the future possibility of the NATO-Russia relationship was referred to, and the spheres of common interests described. In the end of the article, however, there were some concluding remarks concerning the underlying perspectives on foreign policy in Kremlin. According to the article "pragmatism" had become so well liked in Kremlin that it seemed as though the Russian ruling elite were using the NRC as "the main forum for European security system". This meant that they would not have to bother with the troublesome demands from OSCE on democratic values (novayagazeta.ru 2009.09.21). Such comments on the direction Russia was taking have been observed frequently. Another example of how articles from Novaya criticized the direction Russia was taking, is an article that claimed that due to the path Kremlin had chosen for Russia, it could not be expected that Russia would build on "the value of democracy, civil and human rights" in the nearest future (novayagazeta.ru 2007.02.12).

The debate in Novaya on the difference in mentality in terms of security in NATO and in Russia, continued into the summer of 2010. The expectations held in the West to post-Soviet Russia was seen as having been as too high, as they were built on the illusion of how Russia shared the "European and American mind" (novayagazeta.ru 2010.06.21). This implied that Russia did indeed not share the mind European and American. Even though

NATO and Russia still were faced with the same threats, the approach to these challenges was described as unlike. These differences in mindset further made a partnership between them difficult. Another aspect pointed out, worth highlighting, was how it was seen as timely that the Russian leadership decided what it perceived as a bigger threat “Iran and its nuclear weapons, Al-Qaida and Afghanistan or Georgian membership in NATO and activity by the alliance outside the area of Euro-Atlantic zone” (novayagazeta.ru 2010.06.21). This last comment may be seen as a call for the Russian government to focus on real threats, not on fictional or less imposing threats.

Furthermore, an article from Novaya also offers criticism to the partners Russia had chosen for itself through evaluating cooperation on security through the CSTO. According to one article, the attempt of the CSTO to build a security alliance in fact resulted in a “parody of NATO”, because “NATO actually offers its members security” (novayagazeta.ru 2010.07.07). Russia’s partners were described as “dictatorships no one feels threatened by, except the other member countries of the CSTO” (novayagazeta.ru 2010.07.07). The article not just criticized Moscow’s strategy in terms of Russia’s security, but it reflected the perspective of discontent with Kremlin for fraternizing with countries that since the fall of the Soviet Union have not emphasized a democratic development.

A more optimistic perspective on the future of Russia may be found after the Lisbon summit in November. The fact that Medvedev was present at the summit was compared with the importance of Putin’s presence at the Riga summit in 2002. Even though not many concrete results were expected from the summit, one article pointed at how the “Lisbon spirit” sent important signals for possible future cooperation. In contrast to the article that noted how the Russian leadership preferred NATO before OSCE above, this article further concluded that even though NATO might not be the type of alliance that has “fight for human rights and freedom of press” as its main focus, “in a modern world defense and security does not only consist of control over territories, but also protection of values” (Novayagazeta.ru 2010.11.19). It then went on to ask, and it feels as though it did so with a genuine hope for the future: “What values will we be defending together with NATO?” (novayagazeta.ru 2010.11.19).

4.9 Concluding remarks

As the analysis of the NATO debate has showed, there exists a range of views and opinions about NATO, and on the Russian government's policy towards the alliance, in the three Russian newspapers chosen for this study.

In terms of the main concerns of the debate between 2004 and 2010, the short overview of the debate in the first part of the chapter, touched upon the aspects of the debate given most attention. These were further studied more in depth in the second part of the chapter. This included, firstly, the aspect of the 2004-enlargement of NATO. Secondly, the side of the NATO debate linked to perspectives on the possibilities of Georgia and Ukraine entering the alliance. Thirdly, it also led to treating the aspect of the debate concerned with the alliance presence in other post-Soviet republics, mainly in Central Asia, and fourthly, at the aspect of the CFE treaty and the ABM system. From studying the development of the debate, it became obvious that the period that followed the war with Georgia in 2008, was best discussed as a separate part. This was due to the noticeable change in the focus of the debate during these last years, where the process of resuming contact was the main subject of interest.

The analysis has showed that when treating the main issues of the debate closer, the NATO discourse in the three newspapers displayed a range of perspectives on the alliance. These were both in line with the official views, as seen in RG and to a certain degree in NG, as well as being in great contrast to these, as seen in both NG and Novaya. The analysis has also showed that the articles in RG presented the official view without offering much analysis and comment. The articles in NG and Novaya, however, offered analysis on both on NATO and the on Moscow's way of dealing with the alliance.

In the thesis' last chapter, the six sub questions asked in the introduction will be answered by discussing the results of the analysis. The main perspectives on NATO in the Russian newspaper discourse will be discussed, and how these reflect some general trends in Russian foreign policy will be commented.

Chapter five: Conclusion

5.0 The NATO discourse in Russian newspapers

The main goal of this thesis was stated in the introduction as gaining a better understanding of Russian views on NATO by analyzing the main perspectives on the alliance in Russian newspapers. The research question asked what the NATO discourse could tell us about the Russian perspectives on the alliance, and further, what the perspectives on NATO could tell us about Russian foreign policy more in general.

Six sub questions were added to the main research question in order to break down the analysis of the NATO discourse into more comprehensible subjects, which could be treated separately. These concerned, first: whether there *was* a debate about NATO between 2004 and the end of 2010, and second: if the perspectives were in line with or contrasted official views, third: if the articles were of descriptive rather than normative character, fourth: whether images of NATO were mainly negative, or more nuanced, fifth: what the debate's main concerns were, and sixth: if the change of presidency in Russia in 2008 influenced the debate about NATO.

In order to offer an analysis that could answer these questions extensively, the thesis looked at how using the principles of a discourse analysis could be useful in terms of being able to comprehend the context in which the articles were written. Norman Fairclough's model of a three layered analysis was adapted to my analysis, by using his principles of an interrelation between text and context. While the articles are seen as the main subject of analysis, analyzing the NATO discourse in these articles was seen as dependent on knowledge of both the media climate in which they were written, and on the history of the Russia-NATO relationship. Thus, in order to offer a thorough analysis, this thesis offered a backdrop for the analysis consisting of background information on the media in Russia, and on Russia-NATO relations. The development of a media climate with extensive governmental control was treated in chapter two, and the aspect of how the printed press in Russia can be said to be relatively free in contrast to TV was discussed. In chapter three, some aspects of the Russian identity, such as great power aspirations, Russia's complex relationship with the West and its special relationship with its "near abroad", were discussed. These are seen as relevant for understanding the Russia-NATO relationship, as these aspects of Russian identity affects foreign policy priorities. The chapter also looked at the development of the Russia-NATO

relationship from the Cold War and until the end of 2010, treating some of the main events and discussing how the relationship, since the end of the Second World War, has been characterized by a complex combination of confrontations and cooperation. This background information was useful in the process of analyzing the articles.

In terms of the six questions asked on the different aspects of the NATO debate in the Russian newspapers, the analysis in chapter four is worth reassessing. First, as the analysis of the debate from 2004 until 2010 clearly showed, there was indeed a debate about NATO in the three Russian newspapers. The analysis mainly treated the aspect of enlargement in the NATO debate, as this was seen as one of the main concerns in all of the three papers in relations to NATO in this period. Furthermore, as chapter four illustrated, there was a distinct difference between the papers, and they displayed a wide range of views.

In terms of the question on whether the papers presented official views on the alliance or offered contrasting opinions, the articles from RG were used as a point of reference. RG's status as an official newspaper means that the perspectives on the alliance observed in the paper, are official views. As the analysis illustrated, NG had numerous of articles on issues linked to NATO. The paper not only had a large number of articles available, it also offered a whole range of perspectives on the alliance. These could be seen as being both in line with the official perspectives seen in RG, and in stark contrast to these. Perhaps the clearest sign of critique to the official perspective was the obvious discontent over Moscow's diplomacy in relations to NATO matters, linked to the battle for influence in areas of the post-Soviet republics. Further, the analysis showed how Novaya lived up to its profile as an oppositional newspaper, as it to a large extent offered critical perspectives on Moscow and the Russian leadership. The two more independent newspapers also offered analysis of the Russia-NATO relationship, which was missing in RG. While articles from both NG and Novaya often can be characterized as being normative, the articles in RG were mainly descriptive. The exceptions were the articles written by Sergei Karaganov, referred to several places in the analysis as they displayed perspectives on the alliance in line with what one would expect from journalists working at the official newspaper in Russia, had they offered more analysis.

On the question concerning whether the images of the alliance in the Russian NATO discourse in the newspapers were mainly negative, or if the picture was more nuanced, the analysis in chapter four showed that there were indeed both positive and negative approaches to the alliance. In RG, the images of NATO followed the general development of

positive or negative views dependent on the situation, while NG often offered both positive and negative perspectives on one and the same issue. While the articles in Novaya were less concerned with analyzing the alliance, the articles from the paper seemed more concerned with the Russian government's way of dealing with the alliance, which it was mainly negative to.

Already in the overview of the debate in the first part of chapter four, the importance of the competition for influence in the post-Soviet space and the enlargement of NATO in these areas, became apparent. The main issues in the NATO debate concerned the 2004 enlargement of NATO, possible Ukrainian and Georgian memberships, NATO's presence in the areas of Central Asia and Caucasus, as well as the disagreement over the CFE treaty and the possible ABM system in Eastern-Europe. After the suspension of formal contact through the NRC as a result of the war in Georgia, the debate became more concerned with possibilities for resuming contact and "reset" in NATO relations. As these were seen as the debate's main concerns within the timeframe set for the study, these topics were analyzed closer in the second part of chapter four.

The last question added in order to better deal with the NATO discourse in the Russian newspapers, was whether the change in presidency affected the debate about NATO. As illustrated in the analysis, the change of presidency in the Russian Federation, where Dmitri Medvedev took over the post after Vladimir Putin, can hardly be detected in the NATO debate in the three newspapers. In contrast, Barack Obama and the new American administration were given much attention, especially as the term "reset" was frequently discussed and referred to. NATO's new secretary general, Anders Fogh Rasmussen, and his abilities as a politician and his focus on good relations with Russia, was also treated with keen interest. The attempt in the West to reach out to Russia by emphasizing the country's importance in world politics, and how good relations were beneficial to the West, seemed to be noticed in Russia. In terms of the new Russian presidency, however, there seems to have been a sense of indifference, as though knowing that the ruling elite in Kremlin and its foreign policy would remain the same, despite a new presidency.

Moreover, by analyzing the main issues in the debate the goal was to find perspectives on NATO which could contribute to a better understanding of the Russian views on the alliance. As the analysis showed, there were some perspectives on the alliance which can be claimed important in the quest for understanding how NATO is perceived in Russia. There were both negative and positive perspectives, and in terms of negative, the perspectives

on how NATO is perceived as an alliance that has anti-Russian features and which is by nature hostile to Russia, can be said is of importance. The analysis pointed at how Trenin (2007:35) explained the negative views Russia has on other states or alliances as rooted in the aspect of Russian realpolitik, where any subject which has a substantial military capacity is perceived as a potential threat. Thus, the mere fact that NATO is an alliance with military power, means that it poses a potential danger to Russia. Further, another important negative perspective on the alliance is how it is perceived as untrustworthy, due to the alleged promise given to Gorbachev on no-NATO enlargement eastwards. This controversial debate has caused an image in Russia of NATO being an alliance which breaks its promises.

In terms of positive perspectives, the analysis showed that NATO was perceived as being able to serve as a bridge between Russia and the West. Further, it was also seen as beneficial to Russia to have good relations with the alliance. Even though this does not reflect an outright positive view on NATO itself, Russia-NATO relations can be seen as being looked upon as posing possibilities to Russia. It is worth noting that, in the articles which were positive to NATO, especially in RG, the aspect of cooperation was seen as favorable due to how it might strengthen Russia's role. On the other side, cooperation with NATO was also seen as a way for the Russian government to start taking into account democratic values as a part of its security policy, such as seen in several articles from Novaya. It may also be worth pointing out that, in NG and Novaya, a number of articles were more critical to the Russian government's handling of NATO issues, than they were either positive or negative to NATO as an alliance.

Both the negative and positive perspectives illustrate some important aspects of how NATO is perceived in Russia. When discussing the Russia's relationship with the alliance, several of these perspectives can explain some of the attitudes towards the organization. Moreover, after having analyzed the NATO discourse in Russian newspapers, there are some aspects of this discourse which indeed confirm images of Russian foreign policy more in general. From analyzing the debate about NATO in the three papers, it became clear that the idea of zero-sum thinking and the image of balance of power are present in Russian foreign policy in respect to its relationship with NATO. These are aspects which are known for being important in Russian foreign policy also on other matters (Kratochvíl 2008: 404). Further, from analyzing the NATO debate, the image of Russian foreign policy as contradictive, and characterized by both friendly rhetoric and harsh comments, became clear. This is "puzzling combination of contradictory attitudes" is also a feature used to describe the

overall Russian foreign policy culture (Ermarth 2006: 7). As a last point, being treated like an equal by NATO is an aspect of the debate that reflects the overall aspiration for being treated as a great power and an important player at the international arena. Neumann and Pouloit (2011: 113) describe Russian diplomacy as untimely due to its attempt to punch “above its weight”, which is seen as a consequence of its aspirations for being treated as an equal.

The Russia-NATO relationship has been through many waves of increasing and decreasing tensions, as illustrated in chapter three. And while some images of NATO are rooted back to the time of the Cold War, others have emerged as the results of these other waves. Within the period analyzed for this study, the Russia-NATO relationship went through a new wave of both stagnation and prosperity. The thesis has showed that within the NATO discourse in Russian newspapers in the period between 2004 and 2010, some images of the alliance were static, while other came as a result of new events in the relationship.

Hence, the thesis has demonstrated that in spite of a controlled media environment in Russia, a range of views and perspectives on both the North Atlantic Treaty Organization and on Russia’s relationship with the alliance, is to be found in the NATO discourse in the three chosen Russian newspapers. The debate from 2004 until the end of 2010 to a large extent followed the external level of low-high-low tension. While some images of the alliance seem to be constant, other has emerged as the result of new events in the relationship. This has resulted in an image of the NATO discourse in the Russian newspapers consisting of a complex web of different perspectives on the alliance, reflecting the overall complexity of the Russia-NATO relationship.

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<http://www.novayagazeta.ru/politics/39058.html>

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<http://www.novayagazeta.ru/politics/46358.html>

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Appendix

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